





THE
First Sermon,
PREACHED TO
THE HONOURABLE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
now assembled in *Parliament*
at their *Publique Fast*.
Novemb. 17. 1640.

BY
CORNELIUS BURGESS Doctor
of Divinitie.

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C.C.

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TO
THE HONOURABLE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
now Assembled in PARLIAMENT.



When first it pleased You to require our service in Preaching at Your late Publike Fast, we resolved to close our eyes against all Clouds of discouragement arising from our owne unworthinesse and insufficiency, and to set our selves wholly to seek what the Lord would command us to deliver in his Name, at such a time, to such an Honourable and awfull Assembly, with a totall deniall of our selves. Psalm 82.

And albeit we should have beene glad to have beene spared this exposing of our selves to the pub-

The Epistle

publike view; yet, You appointing other wif, we hold it equall that the joynt entreaty of the Representative Body of the whole Communnalty of the kingdome should be regarded, and have chosen rather that others should censure us of weakenesse, than You should charge us with Disobedience: Your Request being no lesse than a command; and Your acceptance sufficient to give value to things of themselves both meane and worthlesse.

Wherefore, according to our Duty, so willingly as the conscioufnesse of our slender performances would permit, we obey Your Order, and doe now, although somewhat late, humbly offer these two plaine Sermons (for, who expects other in a Fast?) at the footstool of Your Tribunal, as a lasting Monument of Our Gratitude for Your encouraging Approbation of, and solemne Thankes for our weake endeavours in the preaching of them.

If in some places we have taken that just liberty which all others have done before us, we trust it shall not be imputed; so long as in the
most

Dedicatory.

most materiall passages we have kept to the very words which at first wee used, so farre as was necessary; and have not wittingly swerved an haire bredth from the sense and substance in the residue.

Wee have indeed pared off some Repetitions, which in speaking had their use, the more to inculcate, and the better to set on the matter, but would not have been so gratefull in Writing, because Readers account every thing too long that hath any thing too much. We have likewise contracted some expressions, which in discourses of so much length, could hardly be so concise as wee desired, Memory being not alwayes at hand to give birth to every Conception of our minds in such formes as wee intended. And some few things we have added, where straites of time, or defect of memory made some balkes in the first delivery.

What ever our performances be, we humbly leave them in Your hands, and under Your Honourable Protection, which we are bold to expect, because they are by Your owne Act drawne

The Epistle

from us, and that in a time so queasie and distempered as can hardly beare that food, or Physick which is needfull for it. Seldome doth a wise Reproofe, a necessary Exhortation, or wholesome Doctrine meet with an obedient Eare.

The God of Heaven steere all Your wrighty consultations by his own Counsell, to his owne Glory; cover You still under his own Wing, and make You the most accomplisht, best united, & most successefull & glorious house of Commons that ever sate in that High Court; but chiefly in the effectuall endeavouring of a further Sanction of, and stronger Guard about our true Palladium, the true Religion, already established among us; in the perfecting of the Reformation of it; in the erecting, maintaining, protecting, and encouraging of an able, godly, faithfull, zealous, profitable, Preaching Ministry, in every Parish Church and Chappell throughout England and Wales; and in the interceding to the Kings sacred Majesty for the setting up of a Faithfull, Iudicious, and Zealous Magistracy, where yet the same is wanting,

* This was our joynt & earnest suit to You, in Preaching; and we now again beseech You to set your hearts and hands to this work, as Benhail, Obadiah and other Princes in Iudah did.

2 Chr. 17.7, 8, 9.

Dedicatory.

wanting, to bee ever at hand to back such a Ministry: without either of which, not only the power of Godlinesse will soone degenerate into formality, and zeale into Lukewarmnesse; but, Popery, Arminianisme, Socinianisme, Prophanenesse, Apostacy, and Atheisme it selfe will more and more croud in upon us, and prevaile against us, doe You all You can by all other meanes.

And now, commending You to God and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build You up further, and to give You an inheritance among all them which bee sanctified; and these our Labours to his further blessing, whereby all may speedily be brought under the line of his Covenant, which is our safety; that hee may continue with us, which is our Glory; and wee with him, which is our happinesse: we rest,

Acts 20. 32.

*The Summe
of both Ser-
mons.*

Yours, most devoted to the service
of Your Faith in all Dutie,

Cornelius Burges.

Stephen Marshall.

7

8



The Preface used in Preaching, before the Text was read.



That great Apostle Saint Paul, when he had to doe with wise men, held it a point of wisdom to passe by some things which he would not have wayved among meaner capacities. His practise shall be now my president.

The Preface, shewing the reason of the choice of this Subject.

This honourable Assembly having designed me to beare so great a share in this weightie Worke, I hold it my dutie to consider, that, how weake and unworthy so ever I my selfe be, yet I am now to speake to Wise Men, who need not so much to be Catechised touching the Nature, as to be incited and quickned to the principall Use of a Religious Fast, which consisteth not solely in such drawing neere to God by extraordinary Prayer and Humiliation as may produce a totall divorce from our deereest Lusts, but also (and that more principally) in a particular, formall, solemne, entire engaging and binding of our selves, by an indissoluble Covenant, to that God whose face and favour we seeke, and implore.

And this I apprehend to be a subject more necessary, by how
B *much*

4 The first Sermon, at the late Fast

Introdu-
tion.

spirits even of Gods owne people, once cast under any great extremitie, with any hope of rescue.

Jer. 25. 11.
29. 10.

This was *Iudah's* case. Before the Babylonian had laid this yoke on their necks, God had plainly revealed, and often inculcated that it should lye upon them just 70. yeeres and no longer, after which they should have libertie of returne to their owne Land againe. Howbeit, the weight of their misery, the absence of God, (who had cast them out of his sight) together with the insolence and crueltie of their proud oppressors, had throwne them downe so low in a disconsolate condition, that nothing which God could either now say or doe, was sufficient to raise up their hearts to any assurance of returne. The same strength which Lust hath to draw men from obedience, it will surely have afterwards to drive men from beleiving, in their greatest necessities of *living by faith*.

Isay 49. 24.

The maine beame which stucke in their eyes to hinder ther sight of deliverance promised, was, the greatnesse and invincible potency of the Chaldean Monarchy (then in her pride) and more especially the strength of *Babylon* the Queene and Mistresse of that puissant Empire. How could they hope to be delivered, when she that commanded the world detained them? *Shall the prey be taken from the Mightie, or the lawfull captive delivered?*

To cure them therefore of this desperate desponfion of minde, the Lord stirred up this Prophet to foretell the totall and finall subversion and ruine of *Babylon* and of that whole Monarchy; and further, to declare from God that the desolation thereof, should be the dissolution of the captivitie of *Iudah* in it. The better to assure them of all this, *Jeremiah* wrote the whole Prophecy against

against *Babylon* (contained in this Chapter and the next following) in a Book by it self, which he sent to *Babylon* by the hand of *Seraiah* (Lord Chamberlaine to *Zedekiah*, and now going in an Embassie from his Master to Great *Nebuchadnezzar*) with Command from the Prophet that, after the reading thereof to the captives, he should binde a stone unto it, and cast it into the midst of *Euphrates*, with this saying pronounced over it, *Thus shall Babylon sinke, and shall not rise, &c.*

But, to hasten to my Text, In the five first verses of this Chapter, the Prophet summarily compriseth the substance of his whole Prophecy against *Babylon*, declaring, 1. her destruction, 2. the Meanes, 3. the consequent thereof to the people of God.

And first, he makes Proclamation, and an Oyes! as it were, to all the world, to come and behold the Great Worke he was to doe against *Babylon* the chiefe Citie of the Empire, against *Bell* the chiefe Idol of that Citie, and against *Merodach* the glory both of that Citie and Empire; yea, though the King then reigning when God meant to destroy it, should prove as potent as that great King, the first of that name, who for restoring the declining Empire to her ancient Splendor, and for translating the Imperiall Seat from *Nineve* to *Babylon*, was by posteritie worshipped as a God, and transferred his name to all his successors, as the name of *Pharaoh* to the Egyptian Kings, of *Benhadad* to the Syrian Monarchs, and of *Augustus* to the Romane Emperours. Although all these should be joyned together to withstand the downfall of that Monarchy, yet desolation should be brought over them all, they should all be confounded and removed for ever, *Vers. 1, 2.* and all to make way for the deliverance of the Church.

Introdu-
ction.
Jer. 51. 59.

I.

introdu-
ction.

*Omnis malum
ab Aquilone.*

But what should be the *meanes* of such an unexpected destruction? This was to be done by an Army from the North, that is, by the *Medes* and *Persians*, both of which, but more especially the *Medes*, were situated towards the North from *Babylon*, and therefore ominous. That these were the men, appeares more fully by their description in the residue of this, and of the 51. Chapter. This Northern Army should be the confusion of *Babylon*, the confusion of *Babylon* should prove the restoring of the Church (*vers. 3.*) And the restoring of the Church should produce a *Covenant* with God.

3. For, behold, the issue and consequent of the ruine of *Babylon* was, the return of the captive Jews, from thence to *Jerusalem*, and a renewing *Covenant* with him that had shewed such mercy on them, *vers. 4, 5.*

For, in these dayes, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of *Israel* shall come, they and the children of *Judah* together, going and weeping, they shall goe and seek the Lord their God. They shall aske the way to *Zion* with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us joyne our selves to the Lord in an everlasting *Covenant* that shall not be forgotten.

2 Chron. 36
22.

This began to be fulfilled at the end of 70. yeeres determined, when the Empire was first over-run and subdued by *Cyrus* the *Persian*. For he made Proclamation of libertie to returne, in the first yeere of his reigne. And when they returned, this was their deportment; they went weeping; and, to seeke the Lord their God. They goe, not so much to repossesse their ancient patrimony and inheritance, and to grow rich in the world, as to seeke and finde the Lord their God, and that with a resolution to enter into *Covenant* with Him, and such a *Covenant* as should never be forgotten, but daily remembered and carefully performed.

You

You now see the Context. Should I now divide the Text, I might shew you here Introdu-
ction.

First, an *Act*, expressed by their industry, in setting Actus.
upon a long and tedious journey to Zion. *They shall
aske the way to Zion.* Modus.

Secondly, the *manner* how they manage this jour-
ney, it is

1. With all *intention of spirit*, they aske the way to Zion, *with their faces thitherward*.
2. With fervent *charitie* towards, and mutuall zeale for each other, to quicken and inflame one another to the same work, *saying, Come.*

Thirdly, the end of their journey which, (with so Finis.
much intention of spirit and inflamed charitie, calling and crying to one another in such a manner,) they set upon; all was for this: *Let us joyne our selves to the Lord in an everlasting Covenant that shall not be forgotten.*

I might easily also cast out these generals of the Text into many lesser branches: but it is not now a time to trifle, or to play with a Text. Yea, I shall not distinctly prosecute all the parts already laid out, but (as the dutie of this day requireth) insist rather upon that which is the maine, and bring in the other as subordinate thereunto, by occasion afterwards, in explication of the principall point. For we see troopes in the Text bound for Zion; and, so hasty *thitherward*, that they *salute not any man by the way*, nor so much as looke aside any way: they goe *with their faces thitherward*: all the stay they make, is but to call others along with them, and amongst these, us, saying, *Come*. And, what is the businesse; the end of all this haste? Nothing but this, *Let us joyne our selves*

unto the Lord in an everlasting Covenant, &c. This, however it were last in execution, yet was it first in their intention, in the undertaking of this journey, and therefore now must be principally insisted upon.

You see here a people loosed from the Babylonish captivitie, and returning to *Zion*: and, in their returne to have this in their hearts, in their mouthes, and in their endeavours, namely, upon the receipt of this mercy, to make speed to their God, to enter into a new Contract and solemne Covenant with him. So that now the chiefe, and only point of instruction which I shall recommend to, and presse upon you, and mine own heart with you, is plainly this, that

The maine
Observation or
Doctrine.

When God vouchsafes any deliverance to his Church, especially from Babylon, then is it most seasonable and most necessary to close with God by a more solemne, strict, and inviolable Covenant to be his, and only his for ever.

In prosecuting this point (wherein I resolve to be plaine, and in earnest) I shall first shew you the *ὅτι* of it, that it is so. Next, the *καὶ ὅτι*, if you will, how and in what manner this must be done. Thirdly, the *διότι*, the grounds and reasons of it: and so proceed to the *Application*.

I. *Ὅτι*. quod
fit.
That it is so.

For the first, the *ὅτι*, that it is so, this will appeare,
1. More generally, upon receipt of any deliverance.
2. More specially, upon any deliverance from *Babylon* above all other.

Proved.

1. More ge-
nerally.

1. In generall, that this use must be made of any deliverance, appeares both by precept, and example in holy Scripture. We shall carry them along together.

Exod. 19. 5.
&c.

In *Deut.* 29. you shall finde *Moses* requiring the people to enter into a speciall Covenant with God, beside the solemne Covenant which he made with them (and they with him

him) in Horeb. To induce them thereunto, Moses re-
 fresheth their memory with the repetition or represen-
 tation of the many deliverances God had given unto
 them, out of Egypt, and in the wilderness by the space
 of fortie yeeres, together with the wonders and mira-
 cles which he daily wrought for them. And in the
 seventh ver. he tels them, that *when ye came into this place*
 (that is, into the Land of Moab) *Sihon the King of Heshbon,*
and Og the King of Bashan, came out against us unto battell,
and we smote them, &c. What then? Here is deliverance
 upon deliverance, and the inference is, *Keep therefore the*
words of this Covenant, and doe them, vers. 9. But, that is the
 Covenant on Gods part, you will say? True, but that is
 not all. He therefore presseth them to an actual perso-
 nall Covenant on their parts, and that upon considera-
 tion of so many deliverances. This was his maine busi-
 nesse with them at the Lords own command. There-
 fore in vers. 10. he thus bespeaks them, *Ye stand this day*
all of you before the Lord your God, your Captaines of your
tribes, your Elders, and your Officers, with all the men of Is-
rael, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in
thy Campe, from the bewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy
water, That thou shouldst enter into Covenant with the Lord
thy God, and into his Oath which the Lord thy God maketh
with thee this day. And in vers. 14. he addeth. *Neither*
with you only doe I make this Covenant, and this oath, but
with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord
our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day.
 Thus you see a Covenant required, stricken, and ratifi-
 ed by solemne Oath of God and his people mutually to
 one another: they binde themselves by solemne Oath
 to him, as he by Oath had bound himselfe to them.
 Thus then it was in the time of Moses, No eminent

1. That it
 is so, in
 the gene-
 rall.
 The first so-
 lemne Cove-
 nant which
 they passed
 into, was af-
 ter their de-
 liverance out
 of Egypt.
 Vers. 1.

A second
 Covenant, a-
 bout fortie
 yeeres after
 the first, when
 they came
 neere to Ca-
 naan and
 shortly after
 were to enter
 into it.

1. That it deliverance went before, but a solemane Covenant fol-
is so, in lowed after*. And, To swear a Covenant, is no new de-
the gene-vice, no humane invention, nor arbitrary Action.

rall.

* As Moses
drew the peo-
ple into a Co-
venant before
their entrance
into Cana-
an; so did
Joshua also, af-
ter they were
possessed of
it, Josh. 24.
25, 26. So
did Ichbiada,
upon the de-
liverance of
Judah from
the tyranny
of that blou-
dy monster
Athaliah,
2 King. 11.
17.

2 Chron. 14.

I will give you but one instance more (among many)
of this kinde, and it is that of *Asa*, that good and reli-
gious King of *Judah*. When *Zerah* the Ethiopian infe-
sted his kingdome with an huge army, even 1000000,
and 300 Chariots, 2 Chron. 14. *Asa* falls to praying, God
heard him; they joyned battell, *Asa* obtained the vi-
ctory, and carryed away very much spoile. What was the
issue? Another Covenant.

For, in Chap. 15. you shall finde that, presently upon
this, God addresseth a Prophet to *Asa*, (*Azariab* the
sonne of *Oded*) to tell him and the people, *The Lord is*
with you while ye be with him. And, to encourage them
to close with God, he addes, in vers. 7. *Be ye strong there-
fore, and let not your hands be weake: for your worke shall be*
rewarded. They must not only worke for God, but be
strong to his worke; and that they might be so, there
was no way like to that of entering into a Covenant with
him. For, so *Asa* understood it, as appeares by the next
words, where it is said, *Asa, when he heard these words,*
take courage; and, although he had before done much
in purging the Cities of *Judah* of Idolatry, and Idols, of
high places, Images, and groves, yet now he goes on to
a more thorough reformation, and put away the remain-
der of abominable Idols out of all the Land of *Judah* and *Ben-
jamin* and out of the Cities which he had taken from *Mount*
Ephraim, and renewed the Altar of the Lord; for ever
where Idols goe up, Gods Altars goe downe, therefore
he pulleth downe the one, and setteth up the other.

And not this alone, but he offered unto the Lord a
great sacrifice, and both himselfe and his people entered
into

into a Covenant to seeke the Lord God of their fathers, with 1. That it all their heart, and with all their soule, that whosoever would is so, in not seeke the Lord God of Israel, should be put to death, whe- the gene- ther small or great, whether man or woman; and they sware rall.

unto the Lord with a loud voyce, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with Cornets. And all this, immediately

upon the deliverance and victory which he had obtain-

ed: for, in vers. 11. it is said expressely, that they offered

unto the Lord, the same time (or, in that very day) of the

spoile which they had brought, 700. Oxen, and 7000. Sheepe;

meaning of those, which they had carryed away from

the Ethiopians that came out to battaile against them.

So that now you see another solemne Covenant entred

into, not by Asa alone, but by all the people of God, a

Covenant solemnized in publique by Sacrifice, by Oath,

and under the highest penaltie of death it selfe to all

that should not observe it.

In pursuit of which Covenant, see what he presently

did. He spared not his owne Mother that regarded it

not. For, when he perceived that, notwithstanding this

Covenant, the Queene his Mother, *Maacha*, would

needs retaine her puppet Gods still, and (amongst the

rest) one abominable Idol, in a grove, so obscene as it

is not fit to be named: (*Abulenſis*^a observeth that it was

Priapus, and conjectureth thence, that she was not only

a grosse Idolatresse, but an abominable strumpet: ^b for,

ordinarily, Idolatry and adultery, spirituall and bodily

fornication goe together^c) It is said, that he removed

her from being Queene, because she had made an Idol in a

grove, and Asa cut down her Idol, and stamp it, and burnt it

at the brooke Kidron, vers. 16. Which passage is exprest

with an emphasis, in 1 King. 15. 11. Also *Maacha* his Mo-

ther, even Her, he removed from being Queene. Although a

^a In 3. Reg.

15. 94. 11.

The Vulgar

hath it in the

Text, ne esset

Principis in Sa-

cris Priapi.

^b Lyra is per-

emptory for

this, *ibid.*

^c Hom. against

peril of Idol.

par. 3.

Rom. 1. 21, 22,

23, 24, &c.

Wisd. 14. 23,

&c. to vers.

28.

Minut. Fœlix

in *Octavio A-*

than. orat.

cont. *Idol. Ter-*

tull. in *Apo-*

log. cap. 15.

B. Hall Con-

templ. in *Asa.*

Lorinus in *Le-*

vii. 18. p. 536.

idem in *Num.*

16. pag. 572.

Aliq; com-

plures.

1. That it *Queene*, although a *Mother**, yet even her he deposed
 as so. from her dignitie.

* Some suppose her to have been his Grand-mother, others say she was his own Mother, of the same name with his Grandmother, which is more probable, because Scripture stile her so.

* Yea, sometimes upon consideration of Gods Judgements felt, or feared.
 2 Chro. 29. 10.
 2 Chro. 34.
 31, 32.

2. In speciall.

This he did, and this he must doe, not only by reason of that voluntary Covenant into which he had entred, but by vertue of the speciall Command of God himselfe, in what ever relation she had stood unto him. Yea, in *Deut. 13. 6.* the Law was more strict, for though she had been neerer than a Mother, even the wife of his bosome, yet if she were an Idolater, and should entise him secretly, saying, *Let us goe and serve other Gods*, she must have been put to death, and his own hand must have been first upon her, vers. 9.

You now see the point proved in the generall, that thus it is with Gods people; upon any notable deliverance*, they enter anew into *solemne and strict Covenant with God.*

2. But more especially ought this to be the care of the Church, when God gives her deliverance out of *Babylon*, out of that servitude and bondage which of all other was most heavy, and lay longest on her. See this in some instances, both on Gods part ayming at this in giving deliverance, and on his peoples part performing this after deliverance from *Babylon.*

On Gods part, first. This was foreshewed under the similitude of the basket of good figs, *Jer. 24. 5.* There it is said by the Lord, the God of Israel, *Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carryed away Captive of Iudah, whom I have sent out of this place into the Land of the Chaldeans for their good: for I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them againe to this Land, &c.* And, in the seventh verse it followeth, *I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord, and I will be their God: for they shall returne unto me with their whole heart. He will give*

give them an heart to know him, to returne, and become ^{1.} *That it* his people, which cannot be without a Covenant. Againe *is so*, in

That this is that which Gods heart is exceedingly set speciall. upon, and full of, namely, that he never meant to bring his people backe from *Babylon*, but upon this very condition (albeit it was a great while ere it was done, and therefore they thrived accordingly, as we shall shew anon) will yet further appeare by many other passages of the Prophecy of *Jeremy*, to passe by fundry other Prophecies uttered by *Isaiah*, *Mitah*, and others.

In *Ier.* 30. 18. we shall finde a Prophecy, that this should be done, (and I shall shew, by and by, that it was afterwards performed) *Behold, saith the Lord, I will bring againe the captivitie of Iacobs tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places, &c.* and, in vers. 21. *I will cause him to draw neere, and he shall approach unto me; and then, as one assured of it, and admiring at it, he presently adds; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?* That is, both Governour and people, all of them should binde and engage themselves, (not their outward man alone, but even their very heart and soule also) by solemne Covenant to be the Lords. That this was the meaning, is cleare by the next verse. *Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.* For it was such an engaging of their hearts, as that one should say, *I am the Lords; and another shall call himselfe by the name of Iacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himselfe by the name of Israel, Isa. 44. 5.*

Vers. 31, &c.

So againe, in *Ier.* 31. the Lord having first promised to bring back the captivitie, he subjoynes; *Behold, the dayes come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Iudah: not according to the Covenant which I made with their fathers,*

1. That it is in the day that I took him out of the Land of Egypt, which is so, in my Covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those dayes, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. Here is a Covenant, God begins the work, but his people follow. They embrace the Covenant, and joine themselves by mutuall Covenant to him. He puts his Law into their hearts, for this very purpose.

Once more. In Jer. 32. 37. there is a promise that God would gather his people out of all countries whither he had cast them in his wrath, and that he would bring them back to their own place, and cause them to dwell safely. He presently addes this as the product of that mercy; they shall be my people, and I will be their God, and I will give them one heart, and one way that they may feare me for ever, &c. I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my feare in their hearts that they shall not depart from me. Which words go no lesse than a solemn Covenant mutually made and stricken betweene God and his people.

Thus then you see, many plaine and pregnant places of Scripture shew, that the maine thing God on his part aymed at, and expected from his people in delivering them from Babylon, was, the firme and solemne tying and engaging of themselves by a formall and effectuall Covenant to him, and the remembring and keeping of it better than formerly they had done.

But, secondly, all these were but prophecies shewing what God foreshewed should be. Will you therefore see the thing acted, and all these promises fulfilled? True

it is indeed that the people did not on their parts performe this, they entred not into such a solemne Covenant, so soone as deliverance was by *Cyrus* proclaimed; and they sped accordingly. *Zerubbabel* went indeed before, in the first yeere of *Cyrus*, and laid the foundation of the Lords House: but we read of no Covenant then made. Therefore, the work was stayed, and the building not finished in an 100 yeeres after, say the best Chronologers.

Then comes *Ezra*, and makes some reformation of manners; and not only so, but some Covenant he and the people entred into. *Ezra* 10. But that was but in a particular case (and it would be thought a strange one, to this age especially, should it now be pressed,) there were many that had trespassed against their God by taking strange wives of the people of the Land (that worshipped not the same God.) Such therefore, as now were duely touched with the sense of this sinne, desire *Ezra* that a solemne Covenant might now be made with God, to put away all such wives, and such as were borne of them, *Verf. 3.* Now, in the fifth verse, we shall finde this executed. For, *Ezra* arose, and made the chiefe Priests, the Levites, and all Israel to swear that they should do according to this word, and they swore.

This was somewhat, but not enough: a partiall Covenant, and such as came short of that intended in my Text. You shall see it more thoroughly performed afterwards, in *Nehemiah*s time. For, after *Ezra*, came *Nehemiah*, and he makes a more thorough Reformation; not of mens manners only, but even of Religion also. He set up the Ordinances of God in their puritie, and tooke care in particular for the preaching of the Word. After all this, he and the people entred into a solemne

1. That it
is so, in
speciall.

lemne Covenant, and that at the time of a publique Fast? And this brings it home to the businesse we are now about. For, as they entred into Covenant upon receipt of such a deliverance, so they did it at the time of a solemne Fast. This will appeare throughout the whole ninth Chapter of *Nehemiah*, where it is first said, that the Children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sack-cloath, and with earth upon them: they separated themselves from strangers, they stood and confessed their sinnes, and the iniquities of their fathers. They justified God in all his proceedings against them, and in all the evils he had brought upon them. They acknowledged that neither they, their Princes, people, or fathers had kept the Law; they had not served God in that Kingdome he had bestowed upon them. Behold, say they, vers. 36. We are servants this day, and for the Land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eate the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold we are servants in it, And it yeeldeth much increase unto the Kings whom thou hast set over us, because of our sinnes: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattell at their pleasure, and we are in great distresse. And because of all this, we make a sure Covenant, in the last verse) and write it, and our Princes, Levites, and Priests seale unto it.

Now here is the full accomplishment of that you have in my Text. What in the Text is set down by way of Prophecy, you here see acted in the History. In *Nehemiah's* time, they come home unto it. And if you look into the tenth Chapter, you shall see who sealed this Covenant: first, the Princes, the Officers, the Magistrates of the Kingdome, the *Parliament men*, if you will so call them; and then the rest of the people. And what is the substance of their Covenant? They entred into a curse, and

and into an Oath, to walke in Gods Law, which was given by 2. How it Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the Com- is so. mandements of the Lord their God, and his Iudgements, and Statutes, vers. 29.

Here then is their Covenant: you see also with what solemnitie it was made and ratified; by *subscribing* of hands, and setting to of their *Seales*, by an *Oath*, and by a *curse*; binding themselves by all the most solemn and strongest bonds that possibly they could; and all this in Publique, and at a *Publique Fast*. So that now the point is cleare, *That it is so*, and that the practise of Gods people hath ever been, upon any great deliverance, especially from *Babylon*, to enter into solemn Covenant with the Lord.

Come we to the second branch propounded, which is the *Kαθότι*, shewing, *in what manner* this Covenant must be made, and *how* men are to joyne themselves to the Lord in this action. 2. *Kαθότι*,
Quomodo sit.
How this is to
be done.

This I shall demonstrate out of the bowels of the Text it self: for therein may you see somewhat required, 1. By way of *disposition* or *preparation* to it. 2. In respect of the *substance* of it. 3. In regard of the *properties* belonging to it. These being opened, I shall give you a full view of this Text, and performe my promise before made unto you. In a three-
fold respect.

The first thing to be unfolded is, the *disposition* or *preparation* to the Covenant; and this appeares in two things, 1. In seeking seriously the face of God, *They shall aske the way to Zion*. 2. In the manner of their addresse unto him, *with their faces thitherward*, saying, *Come*. 1. Of the
disposition re-
quisite to
strike a Co-
venant with
God.
Whereunto is
required

1. The first thing requisite to *dispose*, *qualifie*, and prepare men to strike a Covenant with God, is a serious and humble seeking of the face of God. *They shall aske* 1. *The asking
the way to
Zion.*

2. How
this is to
be done.

the way to Zion. And there first a word of the *place* toward which they were bound ; secondly, of their contending and repaire to it, under that expression of *asking the way thither.*

The *place*, was *Zion*, where first (though it be but a Criticisme, it is yet not unnecessary to be taken notice of, because the word is often pronounced, and written amisse, which may cause ambiguity touching the place) you must put a difference between *Sihon* or *Sion*, and *Zion* : (for these were two different places, and are written in the originall with two different Letters, the former with *ו* the other with *ז*) you must not here understand this, of the former, namely, of *Mount Sihon*, which is all one with *Hermon*, situate in the utmost confines of Israel North-East-ward, neere unto Jordan, (*Dent. 4. 48.*) but conceive it to be meant of *ז* or *Zion* in Hierusalem, which was once the strong hold of the Jebusites, and held out longer unsubdued than any Peece belonging to that people. For, when Israel under the Conduct of *Ioshua* had conquered *Iebus*, after called *Hierusalem*, yet could they not winne *Zion* in it. *Zion* was a strong Castle or Fort, erected upon a rocky mount, toward the South-west part of the Citie, overlooking all the rest ; and that the Jebusites, having abundantly fortified and victualled it, still held, all the dayes of *Ioshua*, and long after, albeit the Israelites possessed the rest of the Citie, *Iosh. 15. 63.* But afterwards when *David* came against it, even that *strong hold* (which the Jebusites thought to be so invincible, that, in scorn of him and his siege, they set up only a few blind & lame people on the walles to defend it) he conquered and called it *the Citie of David*, because after he had wonne it, himself dwelt in it, *2 Sam. 5. 7.* This, for the Topography. Then,

Then, you must know further, that, by *Zion* is sometimes meant the whole city of *Hierusalem*, by a *Synecdoche*; sometimes it was taken for the place of Gods Worship in the holy city, or rather with reference to his Worship and presence there: for that City being the Capital City of the Kingdome, where Thrones were set for Iudgement, was also the special place which God chose to place his name in: there, were the Altars placed for Gods worship, and *thither the Tribes went up to worship*, because there God pleased to manifest his more special presence, and to *command the blessing for evermore*. Thither therefore these returning Captives repaired; even unto *Zion*, the *Watch Towre*, as *S^t Hierome* interprets it, whence God in special manner watched over his people for Good: there they seek his face, and enquire of him, before they presume to enter Covenant with him.

2. How this is to be done.

Now, their addresse to this place, is set forth in this Text, by *asking the way to Zion*. The word *יְהִי* * *From לְנַפְשׁוֹ* though it sometimes import the demanding of a thing which is a point of Justice or equity to give, (as *Gen. 34. 14.*) yet is it usually applyed to note the seeking of some thing by humble prayers and intreaties: so as it is not seldome put for prayer it selfe, *2 Chro: 20. 4.* and, sometimes for an earnest & humble enquiry after some thing we know not, (*Num: 27. 21. Deut: 13. 14.*) that we may be directed aright, and pursue the direction with effect: So here, They *ask the way to Zion*, and that of God, not onely to seek of him a right way for them by fasting and prayer, *Ezra 8. 21.* but, as resolving that somewhat should be done, that they would walke in it, and *appeare before God in Zion*. for, so much is intended here as is expresse more fully elsewhere, viz. in *Isay 2. verse 2, 3. Mic. 4. 1, 2.* where they not onely call

* From לְנַפְשׁוֹ to beseech or pray.

2. *How this is to be done.* one each other to undertake, but they also performe the journey, going up to the mountaine of the Lord. So the Prophet Zachary, the inhabitants of one City shall goe to another, saying, Let us goe speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seeke the Lord of Hosts, I will goe also: yea, many people and strange nations shall come to seeke the Lord of Hosts in Hierusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Zach. 8. 21. 22. And how goe they? not sleightly, carelessly, proudly, but in all humility, yea (as in the verse before my Text) even with weeping, they shall seeke the Lord their God with deepe humiliation and godly sorrow for all those finnes whereby they had formerly broken his Covenant, and for which he had entred upon the forfeiture, and laid those heavy afflictions upon their Loines. *Going, and weeping, they shall goe to seeke their God in Zion.* The very same thing was foretold before (to shew the necessity of the duty) touching Israel. *Ier. 31. 9. They shall come with weeping, and with suplications will I lead them.* So then, this is the first thing in this worke to dispose and prepare men for the Covenant; namely, to *aske the way to Zion*, by a serious, humble, affectionate inquiring and seeking after God in his Ordinances, even with many prayers and teares, that he would be pleased to accept them.

2. In regard
of the *manner*.

Secondly, the *manner* of their addresse is as necessary as the former. It is not every *manner* that will serve the turne. It must be done with all *intention* of spirit in regard of themselves, and with *fervent Charity* towards others. For, they must aske the way to Zion *with their faces thitherward, saying Come.*

That is,
1. With *intention* of Spirit.

Their *intention and fervency of spirit* wherewith they set upon this worke, is set forth under that Hebraisme of asking the way to Zion *with their faces thitherward*. This phrase

phrase is usually an expression of the greatest intention, 2. *How fervency, and contention of mind that can be, in the pursuit of any businesse on foote, or of any way wherein a man is going. Such a phrase you have in Luke 9. 51. where it is said of Christ, that he stedfastly set his face to goe to Hierusalem, or, as if he would goe to Hierusalem: for which cause the Samaritanes would not receive him, ver. 53. that is, they would not entertayne him with any respect, because, that stedfast setting of his face towards Hierusalem* manifested, by his very countenance and aspect, that, where ever his body was, his heart was at Hierusalem (which the Samaritanes could not brooke) and that nothing in the world could take him off from that journey, or, so farre prevaile with him, as to make him linger, or loyter upon the way; no entreaties, feare, shame, nor any thing could stay him, but, obstinata et imperterritamente locum petiit, as it is exprest by Bede. He was no way afraid, or ashamed to be seene and knowne whither he was bound, and what he was going about.*

When therefore it is here said, they shall aske the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, the thing meant thereby, is, that they shall set upon this work with their whole heart, with their whole man, without any feare, or being ashamed, or unwilling to owne the businesse: but, they shall doe it thoroughly and affectionately without wavering, lingring, halting: they shall doe it boldly, presently, openly, indefatigably and continually. In a word, whatsoever can be sayd, or thought upon, to set forth the utmost intention of a mans Spirit in any worke that his heart is most set upon, and that he would lay out his life and all he hath upon, for the accomplishment of it; that was the resolution, & care of these people, & must be ours: this is to aske the way to Zion with

* ἐκ ἧτι ὥστε καὶ κεῖ ἀπερχόμενον, καὶ περιδεύων κώμας καὶ πόλεις. He will no longer turne aside hither and thither, and goe about their villages and Cities. Tit. Boft. in Luc. 9.

2. *How
this is to
be done.*

our faces thitherward. And without this, no entring into Covenant with God. This is, for substance no other (though otherwise expressed) than that of the people in *Asa* his time, when they sware the Covenant before mentioned, *2 Chron. 15.* where it is said, they did it *with all their heart, and with all their soule,* and exprest it by the loudnesse of their voyces, and with shoutings, &c: *re-joycing at the Oath, because they had sworne with all their hearts, and sought him with their whole desire, vers. 15.* Men that will stand disputing, consulting with flesh and bloud, and casting about how the entring into such a Covenant may consist with their profits, honours, lusts, designs, relations, &c. are no fit Covenanters for God. *His people shall be willing, Psal. 110. 3.* their heart, minde, spirit, body, countenance, all, shall professe, and proclaime this to the whole world, that they are for God, for a Covenant, for putting themselves into the strongest bonds that can possibly be thought on to bind them hand and foot, soule and body to the Lord for ever.

2. With cha-
ritie towards
others.

2. Nor is this all. For, the men in my Text, content not themselves to be thus earnestly addicted to the worke in their own particulars; but, (as one stick kindles another) they desire to kindle the same flame of affection in others also, and mutually to blow up the coales in one another, *saying, Come.*

This notes the *fervency* of their *Charitie* towards others also. For, 'tis not here brought in as a formalitie, or complement, but as the evidence of a strong desire to draw as many others as they can to the same journey, and (if it be possible) to keep the same pace with them, as being most unwilling to leave any behind them. This indeed is true Love, unfained Charitie, to draw all we can

can along with us unto God. True Converts, when once they returne themselves, *they cause others to returne* also. And this was often prophecied as a thing which should certainly be: Witnesse all those places in *Isay 2. Mic. 4. and Zach. 8.* before quoted. So then all these things are requisite, and *previous* to the Act of Covenanting with God. There must be a seeking to God with true humiliation, a seeking of him with all intention of spirit, and with all manifestations of a resolution not to be terrified from, daunted at, or ashamed of the worke: yea, with fervent Charitie to draw others into the same Covenant also. Thus much for the disposition previous to the Covenant.

2. *How this is to be done.*

2. The next thing considerable in the *Kadōn* is, the Substance of the Covenant it self. *Let us joyne our selves to the Lord, in a Covenant.*

2. The Substance of the Covenant.

Two things here must be opened; the *matter*, and the *forme* of this solemne action.

Both in respect,

1. The matter of this Act is set forth under this expression, *Let us joyne our selves to the Lord.* The original word וּלְלוּ (from לָלוּ) is very emphatical; so as that word, being explained, will sufficiently set out before you the nature of the Covenant here intended. Some Translators render it, *Let us glue our selves unto the Lord*; which imports a conjunction so neere, as nothing can come between, and so firme, as nothing can dissolve. But more particularly, the verb here used is in Scripture applyed to a double sense, or to denote two things: both of which being set together, will fully discover what it is to be joyned to the Lord in Covenant.

1. Of the matter.

First, it signifyeth the binding of a mans self to the Usurer, of whom he hath borrowed money, to pay backe both principall and interest. So it is used in *Nehem.*

24 *The first Sermon, at the late Fast*

2. *How
this is to
be done.*

* לוינו כסף

Nehem. 5. 4. where the people complaine, *We have borrowed money **, for the Kings tribute, and that upon our Lands and Vineyards. That is, they had engaged both Lands and Vineyards for securitie of the money borrowed, that the Usurer should enter upon all, in case they failed of payment at the day. So that, as men, to make sure, will have a *Statute Staple*, or *recognisance in the nature of a Statute Staple*, acknowledged, whereby a mans person, goods, lands, and all, are bound for the securitie of the Creditor, that he shall have both principall and interest at the day agreed upon (and here that of *Solomon* proves too true, *The borrower is servant to the lender*: for, he hath nothing left to his own dispose; if he would sell any Land, settle any joyncture, there is a *Statute* upon it, he can dispose of nothing till that be taken off;) so it is in the case of any man joyning himself to the Lord by Covenant, he must even bind himself to God as firmly, as fully, as the poore borrower, who for his necessitie takes up money, binds himself to the Usurer. If God lend him any mercy, any blessing, he binds himself to restore not only the principall (the blessing it self) when God shall call for it; but even the interest too; I meane, all possible homage, service, and honour which becomes those who have received so great a benefit.

This is more than implied in that parable of our Saviour touching the talents dispensed, *Matth. 25. 27.* for even to him who had received but one talent, was it said, *Thou oughtest to have put my money to the Exchangers, that at my coming I might have received mine own with usury.* God will have his returne, some interest, for every mercy; and expects a *Statute Staple*, that is, a Covenant, for his better securitie. God will have him bound, soul,
body,

body, estate, life and all ; so as all he is, and hath, shall be forfeited, if he do not keep touch, and make payment according to agreement and Covenant made between them. This is the first use of the word, *nilum*. 2. How this is to be done.

Secondly, there is yet more in it. For, though it be true that the obligation of a borrower to the usurer be as strong as bonds and Statutes can make it ; yet, there is not such an entire, neere, firme, and lasting tye of the borrowerto the Lender, nor such a thorough interest in the whole estate of the Usurer, as there is of him that is in Covenant with God. The Usurer, though he bind the poor borrower fast to him, yet he keeps him at distance, not giving him interest in, or use of any other part of his estate, but only of the summe borrowed. But now this *joyning of our selves to the Lord*, is such, as is made by *marriage*; and gives interest in all that the Lord is, and hath, and admits us to the participation of all the most intimate, neereft, choyseft expressions of the deereft Love of God, which is or can be found between the husband and the wife, who are *joyned* together by the bond of marriage, and made one flesh.

So the word is used, *Gen. 29. 34* where *Leah*, being delivered of her third sonne, *Levi*, thus saith to the women about her, *Now this time will my husband be joyned* unto me, because I have born him three sonnes.* That is, now shall my husband be more arctly united to me in all love, and in all demonstrations of it, and that in the most free, full, and intimate way of expression that possibly can passe between those who are coupled together in so neere a relation.

So then, lay both these together, and you have a cleare view of this *joyning of our selves to the Lord* by Covenant. He that enters into Covenant with God, doth

E

not

וְלֵוִי אִשְׁתִּי
לֵבָנִי

2. *How
this is to
be done.*

not only bind himself, as the needy *borrower* to the Covetous *Usurer*, for a time; but, as the *wife* to the *husband*, to be *wholly his* for ever, without any reservation, limitation, or termination, till death dissolve the bond. As the wife hath interest in the goods, estate, and person of the husband; and all that he hath is hers: so by this *joyning of our selves to the Lord*, He becomes ours, as well as we become his, and both are mutually conjoynd to each other by an indissoluble bond for ever. All the power, wisdom, goodnesse, mercy, grace, glory, that the Great God hath to communicate to the creature, is now assured and made over to every soule that thus engageth himself unto him. And on the other side, all the wit, strength, industry, wealth, honour, friends, life, and all that this man hath, he makes over, and resignes up actually, totally, absolutely, and for ever unto the Lord, to serve and honour him withall; and that with all his heart, and with his whole desire; to have nothing, to do nothing, to be nothing but for the Lord, though all the world be against him for it. This I take to be the full latitude of the *Covenant*, for the *Matter* of it.

2. In regard
of the *forme*.

2. Touching the *forme* of this Act of *joyning our selves to the Lord*, it is expressed in the word *ברית*, the *Covenant*. A *Covenant* is nothing else but an agreement or bargain between two or more persons, and ratified (ordinarily) by some externall solemnity, or rites that may testify and declare the agreement, and ratify it, whereby it becomes unalterable. Therefore it is, that among the variety of ratifications of *Covenants* mentioned in Scripture, still there is somewhat of outward solemnity reported to have been used at the making of them, to strike the bargain thorough.

Some

Sometimes they were made by *Sacrifice*, *Psal.* 50. 5. 2. *How* sometimes by *Oath*, *Deut.* 29. sometimes by an *Oath*, *this is to* and a *curse*, *Neh.* 10. 29. sometimes by *subscription* of *be done.* their hands, sometimes by *sealing* it with their seales *Isay.* 44. 5. also: Sometimes by all these, and by what ever else *Neh.* 9. ult. might most firmly & inviolable knit men unto God. And as it was then, so must it be still. To strike a Covenant, is not, in a private or publique prayer only, to goe to God and say, *Lord I will be thine, I here enter into a Covenant with thee, be thou a witnesse of it, &c.* but it is, to stand and make it *publicly* before the Lord, by some speciall *solemnitie* that may *witnesse* it to all the world, as *Iosiah**, *Asa*, and all the Godly ever did; (even as in ** 2 Chro.* 34. in entring into bonds, or as in solemnizing of matri- 31. mony, men use to doe) Whether by the Sacrament of the *Lords Supper*, by *fasting*, or by ought else, whereby they may become so firmly and arctly joyned to the Lord, that they may not only be no longer *sui juris*, to depart away from the Living God; but, not so much as to sit loose from God, or to stand in any termes of indifferency, which might leave them at libertie to serve, or not to serve God in any dutie, how difficult, or dangerous soever. And thus have you the Substance of the Covenant opened.

3. Take we now a short view of the *properties* of this 3. The *Pro-* Covenant, and they are two; *perpetuitie* and *heedfulnessse*. *erties of the*

1. It must be an *everlasting Covenant*, in regard of *Covenant,* which are continuance. In the Originall it is *עוֹלָם וָעֶד*, a Cove- two. *nant of Ages*. And the 72 *Interpreters* render it to the 1. It must be everlasting for continuance. same purpose, *דיאדמואדינ*, that is, such a Covenant as no time shall terminate, till they who make it cease to be. Some understand this of engaging themselves to stick close to him in the due celebration of his Legal worship,

2. *How
this is to
be done.*

worship, so long as he should continue it in his Church, (which was till, *Shiloh* came) without those mixtures, wherein formerly they had been too bold, and for which God had spewed them out of his Church, and hurled them as farre as Babylon. Others conceive it to be meant of the *Covenant of Grace* that God had sealed to them in the bloud of his Sonne. But, neither of these are ful. For, it is clearly meant of an *Act of theirs* towards God, whereby they bind themselves to him, and that not for a definite time only, but for ever.

It is such a binding, as that of the borrower to the Ufurer, whom nothing can satisfie but full payment. Or rather, such a closing with God, as is that of the wife to the husband, called, in particular reference to the nuptiall knot, *the Covenant of her God*, Prov. 2. 17. She must be his for ever; that is, *so long as she liveth*, Rom. 7. So that, for men to bind themselves by an *everlasting Covenant* to the Lord, is to bind themselves never to step out from him to Idols, to their base lusts, to any creature, in any strait, upon any occasion, or temptation whatsoever; nor, with the dog, to returne any more to their vomit of any kind. They are in Covenant as the wife to the husband; for they are *married unto the Lord for ever*, Hos. 2.

2. It must be
heeded, and
not forgotten.

2. It must be *heeded and minded*; else, it will be to small purpose to be so *lasting*. It must be a Covenant *that shall not be forgotten*.

A Covenant, *quod non tradetur oblivioni*; as Tremelius well; that is, that shall not be *cast behind their backs*. It is but a plaine mockery for men so to enter Covenant with God, as young Gallants enter into bonds to the Ufurer, never thinking more of them, till the day of payment be past, and the Sergeant ready to attach them. *Vnto the wicked*

wicked saith God, what hast thou to do to take my Covenant 2. How into thy mouth, seeing thou castest my words behind thee? this is to be Psal. 50. Only they rightly performe this dutie, who so *done*. joynethemselfes to the Lord, as to remember, and minde the obligation they have sealed. As a poore man that meanes honestly, if he be necessitated to take up money upon his bond, he can hardly eate, walke, sleep, do any thing, be in any company, but that still his minde runs upon the obligation and day of payment: he complains he is in debt, he hath given bond for so much money, and all his care is how to pay his debts, or to get longer time; so it is with a Godly man that hath entred Covenant with the Lord, he hath sealed a bond, and he knows it must be satisfied, or it will be put in suit. Therefore he beares it in minde, he is alwayes casting about how he may performe, and keep touch with God. *I will never forget thy precepts, saith David, I have inclined mine heart to performe thy Statutes alwayes, even unto the end,* Psal. 119. 112. This is one expression.

Againe, It is a Covenant to be remembered, as that of the wife, whereby she stands bound to her husband: she must ever remember it. It is the note of an harlot to forget the Covenant of her God. The chaste wife will so remember the marriage bond, that if she be solicited to unfaithfulnesse, to uncleannesse, &c. she ever hath this in her thoughts, that she hath given herself wholly away to an husband, and is bound to keep her only unto him during life; & this makes her to be even an impregnable wall against all assaults that might otherwise draw her to folly. So must it be in the case in hand: The Covenant must still be in the heart, and in the memory. In every action of a mans life, in every passage and turning of his estate and condition, in every designe or engagement,

2. How *this is to be done.* gagement, *this must not be forgotten*; viz. "I have entered into Covenant with God, as a wife with her husband; will that I am now doing, or going about, stand with my Covenant? Is this to performe Covenant with God? &c. If he be solicited to uncleannesse, to fraud, oppression, any evill whatsoever, this still runs in his minde, There is a Covenant between me and the Lord, I am bound from such courses by the strongest bonds; *How then can I commit this great wickednesse, and sinne against God?*

Psal. 78. 10.

What was it for which *Iudah*, and *Israel* became *Captives*, but the breach of the Covenant? *They kept not the Covenant of God*, saith the Psalmist. And, how so? Because they did *not remember it*. As they soone forgot his workes, so it was not long ere they forgot God their Saviour himselfe too; and then no marvaile, if, at the next bout, they forgot his Covenant also, *Psal. 106*. He then, that would not breake Covenant, must not forget it; but mind, and performe it. Otherwise, it is like *vowing unto God*, and not paying, which is worse than not to vow at all.

Ezelef. 5.

Thus have I dispatcht the Second generall, the *Kadōti*, and shewed you *how* and *in what manner* this Covenant must be striken: *first*, in regard of the *disposition and preparation* of the Soule unto it, it must be with *serious seeking* the face of God & humbling the soule before hand; it must be with *all intention & earnestnes*, with fervent Love and *charity* to draw others the same way. Next, in regard of the Covenant it self, it must be an *act & firm joyning and binding* our selves the Lord, as of the *borrower* to the *Lender*; of the *wife* to the *husband*; and that by some *solemn Act*, which may *testifie* it to all the world, and be a *witnesse* against us, if we keep it not. And all this, *thirdly* for *properties*, must be of *everlasting continuance*, and had

had in continuall remembrance, so as it may be continually performed of all that make it.

3. I proceed to the third and last branch, the *3. 3rd 1. Cur*
3rd 1. Cur Grounds and reasons why, upon receipt of any deliverance, *1st 1. be Grounds,*
 but more especially from Babylon, people should enter *why it is so.*
 into such a covenant with God. And these respect delive- *These are of 2*
 rances either in generall, or from Babylon in speciall. *sorts. viz.*

1. The reasons why this must be done, upon any deli- *1. why, for a*
 verance in generall, are these. *ny delive-*
rance in gene-

1. Because God, at no time so much as when he be- *1. why, for a*
 stowes upon his people some notable deliverance, gives *ny delive-*
 such cleere hints and demonstrations of his willingnesse *rance in gene-*
 to strike an everlasting Covenant with them. No sooner *rall.*
 had the Lord delivered Israel out of Egypt, but within *1. God at such*
 3. Moneths after, he commanded Moses to tell the peo- *times gives*
 ple from him; *clearest evi-*
dence of his
readinesse to
enter Cove-
nant with us.
3. Moneths after, he commanded Moses to tell the peo-
ple from him; Ye have seene what I did unto the Egyptians,
and how I bare you on Eagles wings, and brought you out unto
my selfe. Now therefore if ye will obey my voyce and keep my
Covenant, then yee shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above
all people. Exod. 19. 1. and verse 4, 5. God himselfe, you
see, was now earnest for a Covenant.

It is the nature of God, where he bestowes one bene-
 fit, to adde moe, and still to rise in his blessings. Where
 he once opens his hand to take a people into his prote-
 ction, he opens his heart to take them into his *bosome*.
 Where he puts forth his power to rescue a people, he puts
 out his heart to make them *his owne*, if then they have
 eyes to discern the opportunity. See this most excel-
 lently demonstrated *Ier. 32. from ver. 37. to the 42.* His
 gathering them from their *Captivity*, first warms, then
 melts, and after inflames his heart towards them, ma-
 king it even then to glow as it were upon them, & to be-
 come restlesse till he have bestowed himselfe wholly on
 them

3. *Why it* them by *solemne Covenant* to be their God for ever.

is so; in Now then, shall God, at such a time, be so willing
the gene- and desirous to enter Covenant with men, and shall they
rall. think it too much for them to be in Covenant with
him? Shall he be fast bound to them, and they left free
to sit loose from him? Indeed, this is that which our cor-
rupt nature would willingly have: People would faine
be their owne men; which yet in truth, is, to be the grea-
test slaves. Necessary therefore it is for men, upon receipt
of *any deliverance*, to renew Covenant with God who is
pleased to honour them so farre, as to be in Covenant
with them. For, these two are relatives, and ever goe to-
gether, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*. God
is not the God of any people but of his owne Covenant-
Servants. The rest, he stiles, *Lo-ammi*. Hof. 1. 9. *for yce
are not my people, saith he, and I will not be your God*. They
will not enter into Covenant with me, and I will make
no Covenant with them. That is the first reason.

2. God is
content to be
bound first.

2. As God is pleased to enter into Covenant with his
people, so is he *first* in the Covenant. God requires no
man to bind himself by Covenant to Him, till the Lord
first strike a Covenant with his Soule. As *we love him, be-
cause he loved us first*; so we enter into Covenant with
him, because he first entreth into Covenant with us. *I
will be their God*, he is first bound, and seales first; and
then, and not till then, it followes; *they shall be my people*.
This is the constant tenor of the Covenant. And shall he
begin, and we think much to follow? Can there be a
marriage consummated where onely the man is first mar-
ried to the woman, and the woman will not after, for her
part, be married to the man? Now, God no way so much
declares his willingnesse to be in Covenant, and to be
first in it, as by deliverances (as we shall see more in the

next

next reason:) great reason therefore, men should then
second him by mutuall stipulation. It is an hard case, when men will not follow, where God leades.

3. In deliverances God more especially manifesteth his fidelity in *keeping Covenant* with his people, even when they have *broken Covenant* with him, and forfeited all into his hands. When God delivers a people out of any strait, doth not that usually suppose some folly of theirs going before, & provoking him to cast them into that affliction; whence, upon their cry, he is pleased to deliver them?

3. Why it is so, in the general.

3. In deliverances God more especially manifesteth his fidelity in the Grand Covenant. Psal. 107.

And when they have so farre and so long broken the Lawes, and contemned the Counsel of the most high, and dealt unfaithfully in his Covenant, as that he hath bin even compelled to throw them into *darknesse and the shadow of death*: yet if then, upon their humiliation, he be pleased to deliver them out of all their distresses; this is to give them fresh experience of his infinite love in *Keeping Covenant and mercy* with them, that kept no Covenant with him. This is called a *remembering of his Covenant* with his people, after that *their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and that they accept of the punishment of their iniquity*, when God should have cast them out of their land, among their enemies, as afterward he did. So that, in a deliverance, that which is most predominant in God, and should be most sweet and pretious to his people and most eyed by them, is his fidelity, mercy, and unchangeable Love in bringing out that Covenant he once made with them, and spreading it before himselfe, and making of it good, even when they could not expect it, nor durst to plead it. Hence that passionate speech of God to rebellious Ephraim. *Is Ephraim my deare sonne? is he a pleasant child?* As if he should have

Levit. 26. 41.

Jer. 31. 20.

3. *Why it* said, surely he cannot conclude so; yet, my love, *is so*, in by vertue of the ancient Covenant betwen us, makes the gene- me still so to account him: witnesse that which followes; rall. *for since I spake against him, (that is, as resolving to cast him off forever) I remember him still, (I remember I am in Covenant with him,) therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I wil surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.* Thus,

deliverance is a thread drawne out of the bowells of his Covenant. Great reason therefore that, in this case, his people should think of renewing their league and Covenant with the Lord on their parts, when they have so shamefully broken it, and yet he goes on in so much mercy to manifest his fidelity in *remembering* and *keeping* the Couenant on his part, by giving them deliverance.

⁴
No complete
deliverance
and happi-
nesse, without
a Covenant.

Againe, fourthly and lastly, All our hopes of a *full deliverance*, of complete happinesse, will be delayed, if not frustrate; and, the next deliverance will stick in the birth, and want strength to bring forth, if we come not up to a Covenant for deliverances already received. If God have delivered us once, he will do it no more: or, if he do somewhat, to hold us up by the chin that we sink not, yet will he hold us down from the throne, that we reigne not, till we come up actually and fully in this point of Covenanting with him. It is only to those that *take hold of his Covenant*, that he gives an *everlasting name which shall not be cut off*, *Isay 56. 4, 5.*

He that hath obtained most and greatest deliverances, will, ere long, stand in need of more. Now, one thing is necessary to draw down more, and to move God to *command (further) deliverances for Iacob*; yea, to powre out his whole bosome into the laps of his people, and to crowne all deliverances and blessings received, with this assurance, that he that *hath delivered*, will yet
again

again deliver; and that is, to enter into a solemne Covenant with the Lord, upon consideration of what he hath done already, how ever he should please to deale with us for the future, or for removing any present preffures that lye upon us. Although God begin to deliver, yet he will never perfect the deliverance, till this be done. The people which returned from *Babylon*, found God to keep touch with them, to a day. So soone as the 70. yeeres determined, their captivitie was dissolved, and somewhat was done, the *foundation* of the *Lords house* was laid, but the building went slowly up, the reformation of Church and State went heavily on; and, they were never in a thriving condition, till *Nehemiah*, by the good hand of God, lighted upon this course. Some *Fasts* they had kept before, yea very many; but they never thrived, till he added to their publique and solemne *Fasting*, the fastening of them to God by a *solemne Covenant*. Then, the worke of Reformation, and establishment, went on merrily, then they prospered. Thus farre the Reasons concluding for a Covenant, upon receipt of deliverances in generall.

3. Why it is so
See *Judges* 10.
from *vers.* 9.
to *vers.* 17.

2. The Reasons inducing us thereunto, upon deliverance from *Babylon* in particular, are these.

2 why, for deliverance from *Babylon*,

1. Because *Babylon* (after once the Church was put under her power) had alwayes been the most insolent, heavy, bitter, bloody enemy that ever the Church felt. The violence of *Babylon* was unsupportable, her insolency intolerable, her bloud-thirstinesse insatiable. Hence the Church is bold to challenge all the world to match her misery under the yoke of *Babylon*; Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, (that is, by the heavy hand of *Babylon*) in the day of his fierce wrath, *Lam.* 1. 12.

in speci-
all.
1. *Babylon* hath ever been the forest enemy.

3. *Why it is so, in speciall.* This was so fore, that it hath been by some Fathers, and others, conceived to be the fullest and most lively typical expression of that matchlesse agony and extremitie which our Lord himselfe (hanging upon the *Crosse*) sustained, when he bare all our sinnes, and the wrath of God due to us for them, so farre as to make a full satisfaction to the Justice of his Father, in behalfe of all his people.

And, as it was with old *Babylon*, so it is, and ever will be with the new, (I meane, *mysticall Babylon*) to the end of the world; might she so long continue. Even she also delights in no other drink but the bloud of the Saints, as you shall finde in *Rev. 17. 5.* where the very name written upon her forehead sufficiently sets out her nature: *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.* And, what of her? *I saw, saith Saint Iohn, the woman drunken with the bloud of the Saints, and with the bloud of the Martyrs of Iesus: and when I saw her, I wondred with great admiration,* vers. 6. And well he might. A woman, and drunk! And, if drunk, would no liquor suffice, but *bloud!* no *bloud*, but that of *Saints and Martyrs!* She is never in her element, but when she is swimming in bloud. So insatiable is she, that like the *horse-leeches* daughter, *she never saith, it is enough.*

Therefore, when God gives any deliverance from thence, there is more than ordinary cause to close with the Lord, in a more solemne and extraordinary manner, giving him the praise and glory of so great a mercy. But then more especially, when God works out the *full deliverance* of his Church, by the totall, and finall ruine of *Babylon.* Oh then, then is the time when all the people in heaven must sing *Hallelujah*; ascribing, *salvation, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God,* Revel. 19. 1.

And

And againe, *Hallelujah*, vers. 3. as if they could never sufficiently expresse themselves to God for such a deliverance, such a mercy, such a vengeance. *Why it is so, in speciall.*

2. Againe. When God delivereth from *Babylon*, there is more than ordinary cause of entering into solemne Covenant with him, because the very subjecting of the Godly under that iron yoke, argues more than ordinary breach of Covenant with the Lord in time past, which stirred him up to deale so sharply with them as to put them under the power of *Babylon*. The Provocation was exceeding great, too much to be endured even by infinite Patience it selfe: else, the People of God had never been cast into such a furnace. It was for such a fault as dissolved the very marriage knot between God and his people: it was for *going a whoring from him*. For this it was, that God first put away *Israel*, giving her a Bill of divorce, *Ier. 3. 8*. And for this it was, that he afterwards cast *Judah* also out of his sight, *2 King. 7. 19, 20*. And as it was in former times, so in later Ages of the world. What was the reason that so many millions of soules have been exposed to the butchery of Antichrist in Mysticall *Babylon*, and to be so hood-winckt and blinded by strong delusions, as to beleieve nothing but lyes; even that Great, Great soul-killing Lye, that they might be damned? Saint Paul tells us, it was this; *They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, but had pleasure in unrighteousnesse*, *2 Thess. 2*. What unrighteousnesse? Is it meant of every unrighteousnesse (that is in the nature of it damnable) which is to be found in the world? Surely no: but (*signanter*) of that unrighteousnesse whereby men turned the truth of God into a lye, *Rom. 1*. that is, by corrupting the true worship of the true God, and afterwards falling off to down-right

2. Such a deliverance implies more than ordinary breach of Covenant on our parts, for which God formerly put us under such a yoke.

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3. *Why it is so, in speciall.* Idolatry, even within the pales of the Church it self. Most of you are well feene in the History of the Church, and can soone point with your finger to the times wherein *Babylon* began to besiege *Hierusalem*, and *Antichrist* began to pull of his vizzard, in the Churches of Christ: even then, when *Pictures* and *Images* began first to be set up in Churches, for remembrance; then, for ornament; then, for instruction too; and at last, for adoration and worship. Then, God suffered her to be overrun, and over-spred by *Babylon*, as by an hideous opacum or thick darknesse, and to be exposed and prostituted to all manner of whoredomes and filthinesse: so as the slavery of the Jewish Church in old *Babylon*, was scarce a flea-biting, in comparison of the miseries of the Church Christian under the *New*, which makes havock and merchandise not of the bodies only, but even of the soules of men, Revel. 18. 13.

Now then, when God pleaseth to deliver a people from such bondage, and to awaken them effectually to look up, and to reflect even with astonishment upon those great and gaffly sins of theirs, which had cut asunder the cords of the Covenant between God and their Soules, and provoked God to subject them to so much bondage; and, that they must either renew Covenant, or be obnoxious to more wrath, and be laid open to more and greater temptations and sins; this cannot but exceedingly work upon their soules, causing their hearts to melt, and their very bowels to yearne after the Lord, to enter into a new, an everlasting Covenant that shall never be forgotten.

This is that which God by his servant *Ezekiel*, spake touching the deportment of the remnant of *Israel*, which should escape the sword among the nations and countries

countries whither they had been carryed captives, Ezek. 3. *Why it*
 6. 9. They should, upon such a deliverance, remember *is so, in*
 God, not only with griefe, but resolution also to joyne *speciall.*
 themselves to him more firmly in a perpetuall Cove-
 nant. For, of them, he saith there; *they that escape of you*
shall remember me among the nations, because I am broken
with their whorish heart which hath departed from me, and
with their eyes which goe a whoring after their idols, and they
shall loth themselves for the evils which they have commit-
ted in all their abominations. And of the same people he
 saith, afterwards, * that, upon their returne home, *They*
shall take away all the detestable things, and all the abomina-
tions thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart,
and put a new spirit within them, I will take away the stony
heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh, that
they may walke in my Statutes, and keep mine ordina-
nces, and doe them: and they shall be my people, and I will be
their God. So that here is a full Covenant striken, and
 that upon this ground: viz. the Consideration of those
 great sinnes they formerly committed, whereby they
 had broken their first Covenant and departed from
 their God.

* cap. 11. 18;
 19, 20.

So farre the Reasons, and Grounds of the point; I shall
 now as breifly as I can, endeavour to bring home, and
 set on all by some Application, which I shall reduce to
 3. heads, namely to matter of Reproofe, Information and
 Exhortation. For, if, *When God vouchsafeth any deliverance*
to his people, especially from Babylon, it be most seasonable and
necessary to close with him, by a more solemne, firme, and in-
violable Covenant, to be onely his forever: Then,

Application
 Threefold

I. How may this reprove, and condemne of great in-
 gratitude and folly, many sorts of men among us, that
 are farre from making any such use of the deliverances
 which

1. Use, of Re-
 proofe.

1. Use.
Reproofe

which God hath wrought for them. O beloved! Should I but give you a Catalogue of the many, great, stupendious, and even miraculous deliverances which God hath given us; the personall deliverances he hath often given to each of us apart; the publique, eminent, glorious deliverances he hath given to us together with the whole State; that, in 88. and that of 1605. I meane from the horrid hellish *Gun-powder-Treason*; but especially, and above all the rest, our happy deliverance out of *Babylon* by the blessed Reformation of Religion begun amongst us, some good number of yeeres by past; the time would faile me. But alas! What *use* have we made of them? Hath this *use* ever been so much as thought of by us? Nay verily. For,

Of foure
sorts of men,
viz.

1. Of such as
think a Co-
venant need-
full in trou-
ble, but not
after deliver-
ance.

Hosea 5. 15.

1. Some thinke it bootlesse, thus to *close* in with God, after an evill is over. When Gods hand is heavy upon them, sense of smart compels them to thinke it then a fit season to do somewhat, to confesse their sins; to humble themselves, and to seek God. *In their affliction they will seek me early*, saith the Lord. But so soone as he takes his hand off from them, they cast all care away, as if now (according to that homely proverb) *the devill were dead*, and no further use of any feare, or diligence were to be once thought upon, till (with *Pharaoh*) they come under a worse plague than before; and, as if God had delivered them to no other end, but to live as they list, to cast more dung into his face, and to dishonour and provoke him yet more than ever before.

I appeale to the consciences of many who heare me this day, and I require them from the Lord, to witnesse truly, whether it be not even thus with them. If the plague knock at their doore, if death get in at the window, and begin to shake them by the hand; there is then
some

some apprehension of wrath and judgement; some humbling, some hankering after God. Then, Oh what would not these men do, what would not they promise, on condition to be delivered from their present anguish, and feares! But once deliver them, and God shall heare no more of them, till they be in the same, or worse case again. They turne *Covenanters*? Nay, leave that to the *Puritans*. For their parts, they think more of a *Covenant with death and hell*: for, *God is not in all their thoughts*.

i. Use.
Reproofe.

Had there been, upon the discovery of the Powder-Treason, (which this Honourable Assembly hath cause above all others to preserve eternally in fresh remembrance, and to think more seriously what God looks for at all your hands upon such a deliverance) had there been, I say, no possibilitie of escaping that Blow, what would not men have then done! Oh what prayers, what fasting, what humiliation should we have seene! But, when the snare was once broken, what followed? A *Covenant* with God? Nothing lesse; for, so soone as ever the danger, the feare, the amazement at such an hellish project, and the neere approach to the execution of it, was a little over; the Traitors themselves fell not deeper into the pit of destruction which themselves had digged, than generally all sorts of men did into the gulfes of their old sins, as if they owed more to *Hell*, than to *Heaven*, for so great a deliverance. And, is it better now? Where is the *Covenant* (such a Covenant) with God, that so wonderfull a deliverance deserveth, and requireth?

These men may please themselves, and feed sweetly upon a vain dreame, that there is no harme in all this; but the Apostle brings them in a sad reckoning, after a sharp chiding for it, *Rom. 2. 4, 5*. What? saith he; *Despise*

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1. *Vse.*
Reproofe.

thou the riches of his goodnesse and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodnesse of God leadeth thee to repentance? The end of all Gods goodnesse in forbearing, advancing, and giving thee prosperitie; and of his long suffering, in sparing thee when thou hast abused prosperitie; and of all his mercy, in delivering thee out of adversitie; is, *to lead thee to repentance*, to draw thee neerer to Himself, even in an everlasting Covenant. And if it have not this effect on thee, the Apostle hath said it, and the God of Heaven will make it good, that *thou despisest the riches of his goodnesse, &c.* Thou tramplest all mercies under thine impure feet, when they do not raise and scue thee up so neere to thy God, as to enter a solemne Covenant with them. And, what then? Thou wilt not stay there, but fall into more sinne, and under greater judgement; and, *after thy hardnesse and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thy selfe wrath* (that is, more and more wrath) against the *day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God.* This is the end of all who make not the Goodnesse of God, a prevailing motive thus *to joyne themselves to the Lord*; they fall into more, and greater finnes, and abominations; and so adde daily to that great heape, and to those Sea's of divine wrath that hang over their heads, to overwhelm and confound them for ever.

2.
Of such as
having means
of deliver-
ance think it
enough to
rid out of the
way the in-
struments of
their evils.

2. Others, if, after some time of lying under the weight of many pressures of the Church and State, they arrive at some hopes and opportunities of easing themselves of those burdens, and of freeing the Land of the great Instruments of all their evils; they conceit strongly, that, if this be done, all is done. If but some of the *Nimrods* who have invaded their Laws, and Liberties, be pulled down, (Which is an act of Justice) how do the

the *Many* (who do nothing towards any Reformation of themselves) rejoyce , and promise to themselves great matters ! Now (think they) there will be an end of all our miseries, and we shall see golden dayes ; *Iudgement shall run down like waters, and righteousness like a mightie streame.* 1. Vse. Reproofe. Amos 5. 14.

Oh Brethren ! deceive not your selves. If this be all you look at ; if, upon opening this *doore of hope*, this be all you ayme at, to make use of the time to secure your selves against oppressors, and never thinke of closing with God ; or, but thinke of it ; you may perhaps goe farre in pursuit of your owne designses, in providing against the evils you sigh under ; and, this Parliament may do great things this way : But let me tell you from God, that this will never do the deed, till the *Covenant* we have been all this while speaking of, be resolved on, and solemnly entred into by all those that expect any blessing from that High Assembly. Nor this, nor all the Parliaments in the world shall ever be able to make us happy in such a degree at least as we expect, till the Lord hath even *glewed*, and *married* us all unto himself by mutual Covenant.

It is not only the making of good Lawes to remove our present grievances ; no, nor the cutting down of all the evil Instruments in our State or Church at one blow, that can secure us against the like ; yea, worse evils for the future ; but rather, as one wave follows another, so one mischief will still tread on the heeles of another, and greater plagues will ever crowd in after the former, till we close with God by such a solemne Covenant.

The people of *Palestine*, or *Philistia*, made themselves marvellous merry, when any of the Governours or Kings of *Israel*, or *Iudah* (such as *Sampson*, *David*, *Azziah*, &c.)

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1. Use.
Reproofe.

Isay. 14. 28.

See 2. King.
18. 8.

that had sorely yoked and hampered them, were removed by death, and others come in the roome that could do but little against them. When such an one as *Abaz* who never wonne battaile of them, but still went by the worse, swayed the Scepter; oh how joyfull were the *Philistines*! But marke what a damp God cast in among them in the midst of all their mirth; *Rejoyce not thou whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken*; (that *Vzziah*, and other Potent and successfull Kings are taken away, and weake unhappy *Abaz* come in the roome) *for out of the Serpents root shall come forth a Cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent. Abaz shall leave an Hezekiah behind him, that shall pay all his Fathers debts upon the Philistines, and plague them yet more than all that went before him.*

And have not we seen this verified also neerer home? Have not some, in former times, been taken away, who have been great Oppressors, and Instruments of many sore pressures? And, how have men rejoyced at their falls? Nor know I, why they should not, if Justice in a just way have cut them off. But alas! what Good, in the issue, hath followed, or can be yet hoped for so long as men continue *Philistines*, enemies to God & his Church, *Anti-Covenanters* (even with *Hell*) rather than true *Covenanters* with God? Whether is our Condition any what better now than heretofore, when those *Leviathans* were alive, and in their height? I appeale to your selves. And the reason of all is this, that men mistake the meanes of Cure, or at least fall short of it. The cutting off of evill Doers (how necessary soever it be) is not all, nor the maine requisite to make a people happy; unlesse also there be a thorough joyning of themselves to God by *Covenant*.

If you therefore that be now convened in Parliament, ^{1. Use.} should sit so long as you desire, even these 7 yeares, (if ^{Reprooffe.} your businesse should require it) and think, you would make such Examples of men that have violated the Lawes, and invaded your Liberties, and enact so many wholesome Lawes to prevent the like presumptions for the future, as should put us into a new world, causing men to admire the happy state and frame of Government which you would set up: yet all this would never produce the expected effect, but prove as a meer dreame of an hungry man, who *in his dreame eateth* abundantly, *but when he awakes, is empty*; unlesse you also, not onely resolve upon, but execute this maine duty of entring Covenant with your God.

Againe, thirdly, others can *roare like beares, and mourn fore like doves*, when they find themselves disappointed of their hopes: when Parliaments have been broken up in discontent, *when they have looked for Iudgment, and there is none, for salvation, but it hath bin farre from them*: then, they have howled like dragons, not onely for afflictions, but perhaps for sinnes also, especially if deliverance upon deliverance hath been snatcht from them, even when it hath seemed so neer that they had begun to take possession of it: yet, (filly men that they are!) their evils haunt them still, and prevaile more and more, after all their fastings, humblings, and strong cryes to God their Redeemer. For alas! what will all this doe without a Covenant, without taking hold of God, and joyning themselves to him to be his for ever? you may see such a State of the Church as this described by *Isaiah*: & good were it for us to take warning by it: *We all doe fade as a leafe, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.* And why all this? The next words will tell you; *there is*

3. Of such as thinke extraordinary Fasting and Prayer sufficient, without a Covenant. *Isa. 59. 11.*

Isa. 64. 6, 7.

46 *The first Sermon, at the late Fast*

1. *Vse. Reproofe.* none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himselfe to take hold of thee, say they to the Lord who had hid his face from them, and consumed them for their sinnes. Not that they did not at all call upon God, but, because they did not so call upon him as to stirre up themselves to take hold of him by Covenant; therefore is it accounted no better than a not calling upon him at all. Thus men lose not onely their opportunities of deliverances offered, but their duties also by which they desire to further it against another time.

4. Of such as are convinced of the necessity of a Covenant, yet come not up to it.
Hof. 13. 14.

4. Some, it may be, goe yet further. Vpon the hearing of such a duty (so much pressed and inculcated) they begin to be a little stirred; they are convinced that it is indeed true, such a Covenant is fit to be made: but here (like *Ephraim an unwise sonne*) they stand still at the breaking forth of the Children of the Covenant. They faine would, but loth they be to go thorough with the bargain. They begin to come on, and then fall back againe. They are so long a cheapning, treating, complementing, disputing how safe it may be for them, how well it may stand with their profits, projects, ends, interests, relations; that they coole againe, & never come up to a full resolution. Oh, sayes one, this is a good course, and fit to be taken: but, my engagements, callings, Alliance, company, service will not consist with it. Another sweares, he could find in his heart to make triall of it, but that he should be jeered, scorned, and perhaps lose his place, or hopes, for it: another, he is for it, but at present he cannot enter upon it. Thus one thing or other still keepes this duty without doores, and holds most men off from the worke for ever.

But beloved, take heed of this dally. g. What ever you think, it is no better than a departing away from the living

living God, that springs from an evill heart of unbeleife; 1. Use.
when, being fully convinced of the weight, necessity, *Reproofe.*
and cominodity of the duty, you will yet, *while it is cal-*
led to day, adventure so farre to *harden your hearts,* as not
to set upon the work instantly, and to go thorough with
it. *Heb. 3.*

Woe unto all such dodging Christians; they shall find
to their cost that God will write them *Lo-ammi,* *Hof. 1.*
9. and pronounce of them, *They are not my people, and I*
am not their God.

If any think, what adoe is here? what meanes this
man to be so earnest? would he have us all turne Cove-
nanters? yes, with *God.* Why, what if I doe not? Then
never looke for good from him, how faire soever thy
hopes be. "No? sayes another; Ile try that, sure. I have
"seene many a good day in my time, and hope to
"see more, though I never swallow this doctrine:
therefore he resolves to goe hence, as he came hither;
as he lived yesterday, so he will to morrow, though this
day he doe as his neighbours doe, keeping some order,
(much against the will of his base lusts that ring him but
an harsh peale in his eare for this little abstinence) yet to
morrow he will be for his swearing, drinking, whoring,
any excesse, and riot, as much as ever; and yet, by grace
of God he hopes to prove all these words to be but
wind, and to doe as well as the best of them all when he
comesto die.

But woe worth the day that ever such a man was born
that when he heares God calling him with so much im-
portunity to stand even this very day before the Lord, to en-
ter into Covenant with the Lord his God; and into his Oath,
shall so harden his neck, and harbour such a roote of gall
and worme wood within his heart, as when he heares the
words

1. Vse.
Reproofe.

of the Curse upon all those that will not enter into Covenant; or, entring into it shall not keep it, he shall blesse himselfe in his heart saying, *I shall have peace; though I walke in the imagination of mine heart, and adde drunkennes to thirst*: See, and tremble at what God hath resolved to doe with that man, Deut. 29. 20, 21. *The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smooke against that man; and all the Curses that are written in (Gods) Booke shall ly upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under Heaven.* Here is nothing but fury powred out, upon such a wretch; not a blessing shall descend upon him, not a curse shall escape and go by him; not onely himselfe, and posterity, but his very name (so farre as it is an honour) shall all be cast out of the world, as out of the midst of a sling.

If he please himselfe with this, “ Yet I shall live as long as some others; if they have any happinesse, I resolve to share with them; he will find that God will not leave him so, but *the Lord will separate him unto evill out of all the Tribes of Israel*, so as, though all others be safe; yet, as a stricken Deere is unheard from all the rest, and followed by the dogs till he be pull’d downe and kill’d; so shall it be with this man, according to all the curses of the Covenant, that are written in the Booke of the Law. Although the whole Kingdome be safe, and all others in it be in peace, yet he and his house shall perish; the line of Confusion shall be stretched out over him, hell and damnation shall be his portion, how high soever he now beares his head, and how much so ever he suffer his heart to swell against the truth, supposing all that he likes not, to be nothing but a spice of indiscretion, yea of faction, and (it may be) of Sedition; when yet nothing is offered, but what is (I trust) pregnantly

ly proved out of Holy Scripture. So farre the first *Vse*. 2. *Vse*.
 2. This may *informe* us touching the true cause *Informa-*
 (which most neerely concernes our selves) of the flow *tion*,
 proceedings of Reformation of things amisse among us, ^{touching the}
 both in the Church and Common-wealth: Why God ^{chiefe cause}
 hath not yet given us so full a deliverance from *Babylon*; ^{why Reforma-}
 why there have been so many ebbings and flowings in ^{tion and full}
 matters of Religion, yea, more ebbings than flowings; ^{redresse of our}
 Why generall grievances swell to such an height, and ^{evills goes on}
 that all the opportunities of cure have vanished, so soone ^{so slowly.}
 as appeared: how it comes to passe that albeit God
 hath moved the heart of the King to call Parliament
 after Parliament, yet by and by, one spirit of division or
 another, sometimes from one quarter, sometimes
 from another, (like the *evill spirit* which God sent be-
 tween *Abimelech*, and the men of *Shechem*, to the ruine of *Judg.* 9. 23,
 both) still comes between, & blasteth all our hopes, lea- ^{24.}
 ving us in worse case than we were in before; & whence
 it is (in regard of our selves) that in stead of setting up
 the Kingdome and Ordinances of Christ in more puri-
 ty, there is such a contrary mixture, and such a corrupt-
 ing of all things, in Doctrine, in worship, in every thing;
Arminianisme, *Socinianisme* and *Popish Idolatry* breaking
 in againe over all the Kingdome like a floud.

What is a chiefe cause of all this? Have we not *pray-*
ed? have we not *fasted*? Have we not had more *Fasts* at
Parliaments of late, than in many yeares before? Yea,
 hath not there been, generally among Gods people,
 more frequent humiliations, more frequent seeking
 of God, notwithstanding the malice and rage of some
 men to discountenance and suppress it, than in former
 times? Why then is Deliverance, and Reformation so
 slow in comming?

H

Surely,

2. Vse.
Informa-
tion

Surely, Beloved, we have all this while mistaken the maine businesse, and neglected the principall part of a Religious *Fast*. You come, *Fast* after *Fast*, to seek God in his House; You forbear your victuals, afflict your soules, endure it out a long time; you pray, heare, confesse your sins, and freely acknowledge that all is just that God brought upon us, and that we suffer lesse than we deserve. All this is well. But here is the error, and the true Cause of the continuance of all our evils, and of their growing greater, namely, that all this while we have never, in any *Fast*, or at any other time, entred into such a solemne and publique *Covenant* with God, as his people of old have often done upon like occasions and exigents.

That I may yet more effectually bring home this to all our hearts, give me leave briefly to parallel the slow pace of our deliverance out of *Mysticall Babylon* with that of *Judah*, and some of the remnant of Israel out of *old Babylon*, which for a long time had held them Captives.

Ezra 1. 1, 2.
Ezra. 2.

And here first, be pleased to call to minde, that, as touching the Captive *Jewes*, God failed not (on his part) of his promise. At the end of 70 yeeres, libertie of returne from *Babylon* to *Hierusalem* was proclaimed, in the first yeere of *Cyrus* the *Persian* Monarch: whereupon, many did returne, under the conduct of *Zerobabel*. Being come home to *Hierusalem*, we may not conceive that they were not at all touched with sense of their deliverance, or of the finnes which had formerly provoked the Lord to cast them into that great bondage out of which they were delivered.

Ezra. 3. 6.

Well, on they go; first, to offer sacrifices in the right place, *Although the foundation of the Temple of the Lord*

was

was not yet laid. In the second yeere of their coming Zorob- 2. Vse.
 babel began to set forward the work of the house of the Lord, Informa-
 and the foundation was laid. But the adversaries of In- tion.
 dah (the Great Officers of the Kingdome under the King of Persia) apprehending, or rather pretending, the
 going on of this building to be matter of prejudice and Vers. 8.
 danger to that Monarchy, they procure a stay of it, upon Vers. 10.
 reason of State; so as it was well nigh an hundred yeers Ezra. 4. 1.
 ere they got libertie to go on again, and it was above an
 100 yeeres before the Temple could be finished. For, as
 many exact Chronologers observe, the Temple was not
 perfected in the reigne of *Darius Hystaspis*, as some have
 thought; but in the sixth yeere of *Darius Nothus*, be-
 tween whom and the former *Darius*, both *Xerxes* (the
 husband of *Esther*, and called in Scripture *Ahashuerus*)
 and *Artaxerxes Longimanus* successively swayed the *Per-*
sian Scepter. In all which time, many things were amisse;
 Crueltie, Oppression, Adultery, Mixture with strange
 wives, and other great deformations remained. Then
 comes *Ezra*, after the Temple was finished, and some-
 what he did, to set forward the work of Reformation, in
 the seventh yeere of *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, successor to Ezra 7. 7.
Darius Nothus. And yet, there was much more to do.
 After him therefore, comes *Nehemiah*, in the twentieth Neb. 1. 1.
 yeere of the same *Artaxerxes Mnemon*; and, after all the
 former endeavours, he findes the Church still weltring
 in her bloud, and even wallowing in her owne gore; I
 meane, in most of her old and long continued sins; (al-
 though cured of Idolatry) so that still there was great
 corruption in doctrine, in worship, and in manners.

Whereupon he now resolves, and sets upon a more
 thorough Reformation of all these; but could never
 effect it, till beside the proclaiming, and holding of a
 H 2 publique

2. Vse.
Informa-
tion.

Neh. 9. ult.
and 10. 29.

publique Fast, he and all the people lighted upon this course, namely, of entring into a publique and solemne Covenant with the Lord, *subscribed, sealed, and sworne* unto, as before you have heard: and so, from that time forward, the worke prospered, and the Church was purged of many abominations, wherewith till that time she was defiled.

* Quarto
mense Urbs fuit
expugnata,
quinto autem
fuerat excisum
Templum &
consumptum
incendio: sep-
timo mense in-
terfectus tan-
dem fuit Go-
dolias, qui
fuerat cum
residua plebe
qui collecta fu-
erat ab ejus
manu. Iejuni-
um autem deci-
mi mensis pu-
tant fuisse in-
stitutum post
urbem obses-
sam. Ergo je-
junium mensis
decimi, tempore
alio praecessit,
Calvin. in
Loc. Non,
quod haec
omnia in eo-
dem accide-
runt anno,
sed diversis
annorum in-
tervallis.

Behold here, *Quanta molis erat dilectam condere Gen-tem*, how great a work, how long a businesse to perfect a Reformation even of Gods deereft people. Their captivitie in *Babylon* lasted not halfe so long time, as was spent after their returne thence, ere their Reformation could be brought to any tolerable perfection.

And why so? Did they omit *prayer*, and *fasting*, and seeking early after God? surely no. For, in *Zach. 8. 19.* we read of foure severall publique Fasts, (* *The fast of the fourth moneth, the fast of the fifth moneth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth moneth*) which they held, not only by all the time of the 70 yeeres captivitie in *Babylon*, but many yeeres after their return thence, *Zach. 7. 3. and vers. 5.* But all this labour was in great part lost, for want of this addition to all their humiliation, and prayer; namely, *The joyning of themselves to the Lord in an everlasting Covenant not to be forgotten.*

And when God once directed *Nehemiab* to this course, see, how all things began to thrive and come on a maine. Now, not only the *Temple*, but even the *walls of Hierusalem* were built up, (and that within one twelve yeeres after this Covenant was smitten) which before lay wast many scores of yeeres.

Let us now reflect upon our selves, and the State of Religion, and progresse of Reformation in our owne Church, that we may make up the Parallel.

Some beginnings of our deliverance from *Babylon*,

we received by King *Henry* the eighth. For, he threw 2. *Vse.*
out the *Pope*. His sonne King *Edward* the sixth came af- *Informa-*
ter, and cast out Popery, in the body and bulke of it. *tion.*
great work, and a large step, for the short time of his in-
fant reigne. And indeed, he had many excellent helps
that way, (beside the zeale of his own pious heart) an
Excellent Archbishop, a Prudent and vigilant Prote-
ctor, beside others; else he could never have done so
much. Notwithstanding, the potency and secret under-
minings of those mightie Factions then prevailing, hin-
dred the work not a little, so that it exceeded not an in-
fant *Reformation*; yea, through the immature death of
that *Iosiah*, it soone prov'd abortive.

The Princeesse that came after, quickly turn'd the
Tide, before it was half high water: and she set all the
Gates wide open againe both for *Pope*, and Popery to
re-enter with triumph, and to drink drunk of the bloud
of our Ancestors, till God discharged her, and released
his people from her crueltie.

So that when *Queene Elizabeth* (that glorious *De-*
borah) mounted the Throne, although her heart was up-
right and loathed the Idolatry of the former Reigne,
yet found she worke enough to restore any thing at all,
and to make any beginnings of a *Reformation*. She
soone felt, when she would have thoroughly pluckt up
Popery both root and branch, (superfluous Ceremo-
nies, and all remaining raggs of superstition, as well as
grosse Idolatry) that she had to do with an *Hydra*, ha-
ving such a strong partie of stout Popelings to grap-
ple with at home, and such potent and dangerous abet-
ters of them, to cope with all abroad. I need not name
them. I might adde hereunto, some difficulties arising
from the interests and engagements of not a few of
those

2. Use.
Informa-
tion.

those (though good, and holy men) that underwent voluntary exile in the heat of the *Marian* persecution; who, while they were abroad, had a large share in the troubles at *Franckford*; (too eagerly, perhaps, pursuing the *English* Formes of *Worship*, and *Discipline*) and so, when upon their returne, they were advanced to places of Dignitie, and Government in this Church, they were the more apt and forward to maintaine and hold up that Cause wherein they had so farre appeared, and for which (some of them) with more heat than Charitie had so openly declared themselves, in forreine parts. And so, what by one impediment, and what by another, we see it hath been a long time ere our Reformation can be thoroughly polished and perfected as were to be wished and desired; for there is nothing so perfect, here, but is capable of more perfection.

Nay, so farre are we become now from going forward with the work, notwithstanding the pietie and care of our Princes since the last Restitution of Religion in this Kingdome, that (as it was in *Iosiahs* time, though his own heart were for God, yet there was a pack of rotten men, both Priests and People, very great pretenders to Devotion, but indeed mad upon Images, and Idols) we begin to fall quite back again; and, not only to coast anew upon the brinks of *Babylon*, from whence we were happily delivered, but even to launch out into her deepest Lakes of superstition and Idolatry, under pretence of some extraordinary pietie of the times, and of some good work in hand.

What is the reason of all this, but that (not so much as once) since the first beginning of Reformation of Religion in this Island, we never (for ought I know) entred into such a solemn, publique, universall Covenant
to

to be the Lords, as he requireth for those beginnings al- 2. *Vse.*
ready given us; but have fate loose from God, and so *Informa-*
have not joyned together as one man, zealously to pro- *tion.*
pugne his trueth and Ordinances, and to stand by him
and his Cause, as becomes the people of God, in all just
and warrantable wayes, against all opposers and gain-
sayers.

So long as we please our selves in this libertie of our
holding off from a Covenant with God, we may feed
our selves with vaine hopes of redresse of things amisse,
but shall speed no better than those libertines and back-
sliders in *Ier. 14.* who lookt for great matters from God,
but came short of all, and then seemed to wonder at the
reason. For, thus they bespeake him, ver. 8. *O the hope*
of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldst
thou be as a stranger in the Land, and as a wayfaring man,
that turneth aside to tarry (onely) for a night? Why shouldst
thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save?
yet thou O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy
name. See here how they are put to it. They acknow-
ledge his Power, Goodnesse, Presence, yet they are not
saved. He seemes to be like *Sampson*, with his Locks cut
off, as if he were not able to save, or would not do it: and
this they wonder and stand amazed at, as a thing incre-
dible, and impossible.

But, God makes them a short and sharp answer, (which
may also serve us) ver. 10. *Thus, saith the Lord, have*
they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet;
therefore the Lord doth not accept them. If God be as a
wayfaring man; sometimes with a people, more often
gone from them; sometimes blessing, sometimes cros-
sing them, and suffering them to fall under heavy pres-
sures, and never keeps an even and settled station or
course

course of proceeding with them, it is but that he hath learnt from themselves (as I may so speake:) they will be their own men; they will not be tyed to him so strictly; they will have some libertie for their lusts, for the world, for the devill, for any thing: and loe here is the fruit of it; God will not be bound to, nor walke with them; he will not draw out that strength, that goodnesse, that compassion which might deliver them from the evils they howle under; He will neither heare them, nor any body else for them; not *Jeremy* himself, *vers. 11.* not *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, *Ezek. 14.* Nothing therefore, but a more solemne and strict Covenant with God, will put us into a posture and condition capable of perfect redresse of our grievances, how faire so ever either now, or hereafter, we may seeme to be for it. This is the second use.

3. Use, of
Exhorta-
tion.

Thirdly, *suffer*, I beseech you, a few words of *Exhortation*. The returning Jewes (you see) call upon all their Nation to enter into Covenant. Give me leave then, to call upon You the *Representative Body* of this whole Kingdome who stand here before the Lord this day to humble your soules, and let me also prevaile with you all, to joyne your selves, even this day, to the Lord in an everlasting Covenant that shall not be forgotten. Make this day, a day in deed, a day of Covenanting with God, and God shall Covenant with you, and make it the beginning of more happines than ever you yet enjoyed.

Beloved, mistake me not, my meaning extends not to engage you in any *Civill Covenant* and *Bond* for defence of your Municipall Lawes and Liberties. No doubt you will be able to find meanes enow (by the blessing of God) to settle those things, in a legall way; especially if you be carefull to Covenant with God.

Much

Much lesse is it my purpose to draw you into that late ^{3. Use.} Ecclesiasticall Oath and Covenant (enjoyned by the late ^{Exhorta-} Canon) which in my apprehension is little lesse than a ^{tion.} Combination and Conspiracy against both King and State. My businesse is , meerly to perswade you into a Religious Covenant with God, as himselfe hath prescribed and commanded ; and, his people, in the best times of Reformation, have readily admitted: namely, every man to stirre up himself & to lift up his Soule to take hold of God, to be glued and united to him, in all faithfulnessse, sincerity, care, and diligence, to be onely his for ever.

This if we doe, we need not care much for other Covenants : God will provide for that, and make a league for us even with the *beasts of the field*, and with the *stones of the street* ; he will make our *Exactors peace*, and our *Officers righteousness*, violence shall no more be heard in the ^{Isa. 60. 17.} Land, nor wasting, nor destruction within our borders ; our ^{18.} very walls shall be *salvation*, and our *Gates praise*. He will be a God of Covenants, and take care for our estates , Lawes, liberties, lives, children and all that belong to us, when once this is done.

Therefore I beseech you, yea, I require you in the name of the God of heaven, whose you are, whom you serve, before whom you stand, and from whom you expect salvation in the midst of the Earth, as well as in heaven, that you forthwith enter into this bond. Expect no assistance, no successe in any of your Consultations, in any Lawes that you agree upon, till you have fully brought your hearts to this point, to follow the Lord fully ; to be no more for your selves than you would have the dearest wife of your bosome to be for any other man in the world ; but, to be wholly for the Lord , to imploy and improve all your wit , abilities , industry, Counsells, I actions,

3. *Vse.*
Exhorta-
tion.

Gen. 17. 10.

Psal. 50. 5.

Exod. 19.

Deut. 29.

actions, estate, honour, and lives to promote his service and honour, what ever become of your selves and yours for doing of it. Say not as some Jeerers (of whom it is hard to judge whether their malice or ignorance be the greater) doe, that there needes no more Covenants than what we made in Baptisme, and that all other Covenants favour strongly of faction and the Puritan Leaven. For, so Gods people of old made a *Covenant*, by *Circumcision*, and after by *Sacrifice*, that is, in every *sacrifice* which they offered, they did renew their *Covenant* begun in *Circumcision*. Neverthelesse, God thought it necessary often to call them out to strike another solemn *Covenant* with him besides the former. You have already heard that so soone as the Israelites were gone out of Egypt, & entred a little way in the wildernesse, he put them upon a *Covenant*. When he brought them neer to *Canaan*, he required another solempne *Covenant* of them. And when *Ioshuah* had brought them into *Canaan*, and divided to each of them the lot of his inheritance, he drew them into another solempne *Covenant*. *Iosh.* 24. So that here was *Covenant* upon *Covenant*, and yet can no man (without blasphemy) charge it with any Puritan humour, faction, or any thing superfluous or uncomely for the Greatest on earth to submit unto.

That I may a little more enforce this duty, and quicken you to the imbracing of it, give me leave to present you with some *Motives* farther to presse you to it, and with some few *Directions* to guide you in it.

Motives
to a Co-
venant.

1. Our many
Deliverances.

1. For, *Motives.*

Consider. 1. how many, great, admirable, and even miraculous deliverances God hath given us; What great things he hath done for us. No Nation under heaven can say more to his praise, in this kind, than we have

have cause to do. Our Great deliverances out of *Babylon*, from the *Spanish Invasion*, from the *Gun-powder Treason*, and from many other evils and feares, do all call upon you for a Covenant. Yea, even the present Mercy Motives. and Opportunitie of opening that Ancient, Regular and Approved Way of cure of those publique evils that threaten confusion and desolation to all, pleades hard for the same dutie. But, among all these, I desire You of that Great and honourable Body of the Parliament, to reflect sadly upon that Stupendious Deliverance from the *Gun-powder Treason*, which more especially and immediately was bent against You. For, albeit the ruine of the whole Kingdome was in their Eye who were the Cursed instruments of Antichrist, and of the Devill his Father, in that hellish Designe; yet, no blow could have come at us, but through Your sides. And, albeit some of You that have the honour to be members of this present Parliament, were then unborn; yet, had that Plot taken effect, scarce any of You had been this day in being, to have fate there now, but had long since been covered and buried under the ashes of confusion. Thinke now, whether such a preservation deserve lesse at Your hands, than to give Your selves to your Great Deliverer, for so Great a Deliverance, whereby three Nations destinated at once to Death, received no lesse than a joyfull resurrection from the Dead, and were again *born at once*.

Therefore, let not this Great mercy seeme small in Your eyes. And, remember too, that you may have as much need of God another time: nay, you know not what need you may have of him this present Parliament. You cannot be ignorant of the many murmures and more than whisperings of some desperate and devilish

3. Use.
Exhorta-
tion.
Motives.

conception suspected to be now in the womb of the Jesuiticall faction: And, how neere it may be to the birth, or how prodigious it may prove being born, I take not upon me to divine: but this we are all sure of, that what ever it be which they are big withall, it shall not want the least graine of the utmost extremitie of malice and mischief that all the wit, power, and industry of Hell it self can contribute unto it; and, that they labour, as a woman in travaile, to be speedily delivered of it.

What dangers, and what cause of feare there may be at the present, I leave to your Wisdome to consider. But this be confident of, if Deliverances already received can prevaile with you for a *Covenant*, that *Covenant* will be your securitie; for it will certainly engage all the power and wisdome of the Great and only wise God of heaven and earth to be on your side forever. So that if God himself have power enough, wisdome enough, and care enough, you cannot miscarry; *no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, no plot, no gates of hell shall prevaile against you.* And, if he have goodnesse enough, mercy enough, bowels enow in him, he will then also, raine down abundance of trueth, righteousness, justice, peace and plentie upon all Corners of the Land from whence, and on whose errand, You are now come together. Therefore it becomes you, above all others, to be first in a *Covenant*.

2. There can be no full enjoying of God, without a *Covenant*.

2. Consider that, till we do this, there cannot be such a full enjoying of God, as otherwise there might be. Indeed, the perfect fruition of God is not to be expected till we come to heaven; but yet we might have much more of God, even in this life, than now we have, could we be perswaded to such a *Covenant* with him.

Whatsoever experience we have of him now in any deliveranc

deliverance bestowed, it would be doubled, if, upon the deliverance received, we would thus be joyned to him. Nor is this a notion or conceit only, but a reall trueth.

3. Vse.
Exhorta-
tion.

For, marke what He saith to his people, *Hos. 2.* Motives.
*vers. 19, 20. I will marry thee unto me for ever, I will be-
troath thee unto me in righteousness, and in Iudgement,
and in loving kindnesse, and in mercies, I will even marry
thee unto me in faithfulnessse, and thou shalt know the Lord.*
He that enters into Covenant with God, is betroathed,
yea even married to him: And how married? even to
the partaking of all his goods, of all he hath, yea of him-
self, and of all that he is. As the wife may say, *Vbi tu
Caia, ego Caia*; and, as *Laban* sometimes, of *Iacobs* wives, *Gen. 31. 43.*
*children, and cattell, These daughters are my daughters,
and these children are my children, and these cattell are my
cattell, and all that thou seest are mine:* So a man once
married to the Lord by Covenant, may without arrogan-
cy say, this *righteousnesse* is my *righteousnesse*, this *judge-
ment* is my *iudgement*, this *loving kindnesse*, these *mercies*,
this *faithfulnessse* which I see in thee, and all that thou
hast is mine, for my comfort, supply, support, direction,
salvation, and what not?

And take notice of that phrase, *Thou shalt know the
Lord.* Did they not know him before? Yes; but never
in such a manner, with such a *Knowledge*, at least in such a
measure. They shall now know him in such neere, fami-
liar, sweet and ineffable expressions of his deereft, deep-
est, choycest conjugal love, as they never tasted, nor
could taste of before.

We know how it is with a wife married to a loving
husband. They loved one another before marriage, and
many expressions of a speciall love passed betweene
them, but they never enjoyed one another fully till the

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tion.

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marriage was solemnized. Then, there is not only a more intimate manifestation of fervent, intire, loyall, chaste love; but a further enlarging and stretching out of mutuall affections to each other, than they could possibly have beleev'd they should ever have reached unto, till now experience assure them of it. And even thus it is between us and God. Is he Good in deliverances? have we tasted of his love already? Oh how great would his goodnesse be, how full of grace, mercy, bountie; and, how would he communicate even whole rivers of all these to that Soule that would once come up to him, and close with him in an *everlasting Covenant*! *All the wayes of the Lord are mercy and trueth, unto such as (make, and) keep Covenant with him, Psal. 25. 10.*

3. No buck-
ling to the
worke God
calls us unto,
without a
Covenant.

3. Consider that what ever worke God calls You to, Yee will never buckle thoroughly to it, till you have entred into *Covenant* with him. An apprentice boy when he goes to a Master upon tryall onely, his minde is now on, then off againe; sometimes he could like the trade, by and by his minde hangs after his Mother at home, or after some other course of life, and he never sets close to his businesse, till he be bound. When once the Indentures be sealed, and he enrolled, he knowes there is now no more time to deliberate, but he must fall to his busines, or else take what happens for his idlenesse and negligence. So is it with a wife; if she be but onely promised, or betroathed to a man, she may come to his house, and cast an eye up and downe; but it is rather to observe, than to act: she may perhaps cast out a word now and then somewhat freely also; but she never sets her selfe to guide the house, or to doe any thing to purpose, till she be married: then, *she careth for the things of the world*; that is, with all possible diligence looking

looking to, and managing of the businesse of the family ^{3. Use.} committed to her, *how she may please her husband*: all her ^{Exhorta-} thoughts, care, diligence run this way; she makes it ^{tion.} her businesse that she must stick unto, and daily manage ^{Motives.} as a part of the marriage Covenant. And thus also it will ^{1 Cor. 7, 34.} be with you. You have much worke under your hands, and are likely to have more; and I hope you desire to doe all in truth of heart, for God, and not for ends of your owne: but let me tell you, this will never be done thoroughly till once you be *married* to him by *solemne Covenant*. Then, will you *care indeed for the things of the Lord, how you may please the Lord*, in every cause, in every Answer to any Petition, and in every Vote of any Bill, or sentence. You would then think, when you come to manage, debate, vote, any Question, "I am the Lords, "not mine owne, not my friends; will this I doe, stand "with my Covenant? will it please God? will it be pro- "fitable for the State? is it agreeable to Justice and equi- "tie? Then, on with it, no man shall divert, or take me off. But, till then, one will entreate for his friend, another for his; one will make you one way, another would draw you another way; and they are both your friends, and you knowe not how to deny either: and thus are you even torne in peeces betweene them, in so much as you sometimes resolve to be absent, or to sit still and say nothing; or, to gratifie him that hath most power with You, be the Cause what it will. But when once the Covenant is sealed, all this will be at an end; You will quickly stop your eares against all perswasions that may hinder Justice and Reformation; and, when this is known, men will soone forbear also to trouble You with such solicitations.

Againe fourthly; Wicked men stick not *at a Covenant*

^{4. Wicked men Covenant with Hell.}

64 *The first Sermon, at the late Fast*

3. *Vse.*
Exhorta-
tion.

Motives.
Isay. 28.

with death and hell it self, so they may but satisfie their Lusts; though they know the end thereof will be damnation. Oh then shall not we much more make a Covenant with our God to do his will, which will be beneficiall and comfortable both here and hereafter, and procure a full torrent of his mercies, bountie, grace, and eternall life, to flow in upon us!

5. The Devil
himselfe will
do no great
matters for
his vassals
without a
Covenant.

5. Consider that the Devill himself will have a Covenant from all his vassals that expect any extraordinary matters from him; else, he will not be engaged to be at their Command. There is not a Witch that hath the Devill at her beck, but she must seale a Covenant to him, sometimes with her bloud, sometimes by other rites and devices, and perhaps he must suck her too (as in those hellish bargaines you know they use;) and then, he is for her, during the time agreed upon. And shall we think God will be so cheap, as to be (with reverence be it spoken) at our Command, to help, direct, assist, deliver and save us, who will not do so much for him as Witches and Sorcerers will do for the Devill?

In the 45 of *Isay*, vers. 11. there is a strong expression this way; *Thus saith the Lord, the Holy one of Israel, and his Maker, aske of mee things to come concerning my sonnes, and concerning the work of my hands Command ye mee.* It is not to be thought that God complementeth with his people, but is free and heartie in the expression of what they shall really find him. But marke; it *concernes his Sonnes*; that is, those that are truely in Covenant with him. This priviledge is for none else. So that the way to have God at Command, (with humilitie be it used) is to be his sonnes and daughters by Covenant. For, to whom it is said, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*, to them is it spoken, *I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sonnes*

sonnes and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. 6. 3. Vse.
18. And to them he saith also, Command ye me. Exhorta-

6. Consider that it is the proper and chiefe businesse of a Fast, to enter into Covenant with God. You see it to be the practise of the Church in *Nehemiah's* time. And where this hath been omitted, the Fast hath been lost. God never accounted any of those foure annuall solemne Fasts before mentioned, that were so long in use among the Jews, to be *fasts unto him*; but calles them *fasts to themselves*, Zach. 7. 5, 6. Why, but because they looked no further in their Fasts, but to afflict their soules for a day, to bow down their heads as a bullrush, and to spread sack-cloth and ashes under them, and there an end. But they lost all their labour, getting nothing from God but a chiding, and contempt. 6. This is the proper worke of a Religious Fast. Nehem. 9.

And in trueth, when will we thus joyne our selves to the Lord, if not at a Fast? Then, are our hearts in more than ordinary tune for such a work, when we are brought to set our sinnes before us, and humbly to confesse, bewaile and renounce them; when we have taken some paines with our Soules to soften, and melt them before the Lord; especially if then they be in any measure raised up towards Him with any apprehension of his love in the pardon of so many and great sinnes, even when the Soule is most cast down for them. Then, I say strike through the Covenant, or it will never be. If you let slip this opportunitie, you may perhaps never obtaine the like while you live; but either your selves may be cut off, or your hearts shut up in desperate hardnesse, like unto *Pharoah*, whom every deliverance, and new experience of Gods favour in taking off new evils, hardened more, and made worse.

3. *Vse.*
Exhorta-
tion.

Motives.

7. This very
 Day began
 the second
 Reformation
 of Religion.

7. In the last place (and let it not have the least force of perswasion) remember and consider that this day, even this very day, the 17. of *November*, 82. yeeres sithence, began a new resurrection of this Kingdome from the dead, our second happy Reformation of Religion by the auspicious entrance of our late Royal *Deborah* (worthy of eternall remembrance and honour) into her blessed and glorious Reigne; and that, from thenceforth Religion thrived, and prospered under her Government with admirable successe, against a whole world of oppositions from Popish factors at home and abroad: So as the very Gates of hell were never able to extinguish that Light, which God by her meanes hath set up amongst us.

Consider I beseech you, that it is not without a speciall Providence that this your meeting was cast upon this very day (for, I presume, little did you think of the 17 of *November*, when you first fixed on this day for your *Fast*;) that, even from thence, one hammer might be borrowed to drive home this nayle of Exhortation, that the very memory of so blessed a work begun on this very day, might thoroughly inflame you with desire to enter into a *Covenant*; and so, to go forward to perfect that happy Reformation, which yet in many parts lyes unpollished and unperfect.

Oh suffer not that *doore of hope* by Her set open this day, to be again shut, for want of a *Covenant*. If you would indeed honour Her precious memory; yea, honour God and your selves, and not only continue the possession of what she (as a most glorious Conduit pipe) hath transmitted to us, but perfect the work; set upon this duty of *joyning your selves to the Lord in an everlasting Covenant*

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Covenant that shall not be forgotten. And so have you the 3. *Vse.*
Motives. *Exhorta-*

2. I shall now shut up all with some few *Directions* to *tion.*
 help us in it. And here, passing by what hath been al- *Meares how*
 ready spoken touching the *preparatives* to it, the *Sub-* *to enter into*
stance of it, and the *properties* required in it, I shall only *Covenant.*
 give you these fixe subsequent *Directions*.

1. Give a Bill of divorce to all your Lusts, or kill
 them out-right. This Covenant is a marriage-Cove- 1. *Give a Bill of*
 nant, and there is no marrying with God, so long as *Divorce to*
 your former husband, your base corruptions, your *all your Lusts.*
 swearing, riot, drunkenesse, uncleanness, pride, op-
 pression, and what ever else your soules *know to be the*
plague of your own hearts, remaine alive and undivorced.
For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the Law
to her husband so long as he liveth: but, if he be once dead,
she is free from that Law, Rom. 7. Therefore send these
 packing, in the first place. A wise man will never marry
 a strumpet, nor with any woman, that hath another hus-
 band: his wife that shall be only his own, none else shall
 have interest in her. Much lesse then, will the Holy
 and Jealous God admit of any Spouse that is wedded to
 any lust, and so continueth. Say then, what wilt thou
 now do? wilt thou still keep thy darling lust? Hast thou
 been a swearer, and so thou wilt be? a drunkard, an un-
 cleane person, an oppressour, a prophane *Esau*, and wilt
 be so still? Know, that God will none of thee, but ab-
 horres all such as thou art. He will admit none into Co-
 venant but such as *touch not the unclean thing, but separate*
 from it. To them only it is, that he promiseth, *I will be* 2 *Cor. 6.*
their God, and they shall be my people. 2.

2. More especially purge out and cast away (as a Men- *ally cast out*
struous cloth) all *Idols* and *Idolatry* in particular. All our *all Idols and*
Idolatry.
 Lusts *Psal. 5. 4.*

3. Vse.
Exhorta-
tion

Meanes.

Jer. 44. 4.

2 Kin. 17.

Lusts are lothsome to his stomach, but nothing is so abominable to his Soule, as *Idolatry*. This is that spirituall whoredome which meritoriously dissolves the marriage bond where it is already knit, and lies as a barre in the way to a Covenant with God, where yet it is not made. This was it for which the Lord proceeded so severely, first against the ten Tribes, and then against the residue, as you all know. For this, the Land spewed them out. And where ever God promiseth to recall them, he usually premiseth this, (which should first be done) *From all your Idols will I cleanse you*, Ezek. 36. 25. *Ephraim also shall say, What have I to do any more with Idols?* Hos. 14. 8. and all shall cast them away with detestation, saying, *Get thee hence*, Isay. 30. 22.

Every Idol is that great *Image of Jealousy*, which the Lord can by no meanes endure, and which will certainly be the destruction of King and People, where ever it is entertained, especially if againe received in, after it hath been once ejected. A sad example whereof we have in *Judah*, where, after *Iosiah* had taken away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to *Israel*, and made all that were present in *Israel* to serve the Lord onely, the Act of Resumption of Idols and Idolatry by the succeeding Kings (although it is probable they did it onely secretly like those in 2 Kin. 17. 9.) became the ruine of those Kings, and Kingdomes.

Beloved, let me speake freely, for I speake for God, and for all your safeties. You cannot be ignorant of the grosse Idolatry daily encreasing among us, and committed not (as adultery) in Corners onely, but in the open light; people going to, and coming from the Masse in great multitudes, and that as ordinarily, openly, confidently as others go to and from our Churches.

And

And I doubt not but some of you doe know the number 3. *Vse.*
of Masses to exceed that of Sermons. *Exhorta-*

Whose heart bleeds not over this prodigious growth *tion.*
of Popery and over flowing of Popish Masses? Who Meanes.
knowes not, that in the Masse is committed the most
abominable Idolatry that ever the Sunne beheld in the
Christian world? Who remembers not with indignati-
on and horror, how often that insatiable Idol hath bath-
ed it selfe in the blood of many of our Ancestors and
Progenitors? And can any be so silly as to beleewe, that
it will rest satisfied till it swim againe in our blood also;
unlesse we will joyne with Idolaters, and so perish in
Hell? For what ever some ment alke of the possibility of
the salvation of some persons in that Church, (as they
call it) yet it is agreed on all hands, among us, that,
for those of our owne Nation and once of our owne
Church where the light hath so long shined in so much
brightnesse, so as they have both received & professed
it; if they shall (whether to gratifie a Parent, a wife,
husband, friend, Master &c.) put out their owne eyes,
and returne backe to *Babylon* from whence they were
once set free, their case is very desperate and dismall,
and it had been better for them never to have knowne *2. Pet. 2.*
the way of righteousness, then after they have knowne it to
turne from the holy Commandement once delivered unto
them. Therefore I beseech you to take care of these a-
bove others.

Nor speake I this, onely to prevent a publique tole-
ration, (which I hope, through the care of our Pious
King, and your diligence, our eyes shall never see) but
to put on Authority to the utter rooting out of that a- *2. Kin. 17. 9.*
bomination, although committed in secret; and with
connivence onely.

3. Use.
Exhorta-
tion
Meanes.

If then you will not halt betweene Two opinions, if you will be thorough for God, and follow him fully, downe with all *Idols* and *Idolatry* through the Kingdome, so farre as the making of the *Lawes* yet more strict and full for that purpose, may effect it. Till then, you may, if you will, talke of a *Covenant*, and thinke to doe great matters: but that Great God who is so jealous of his glory in that, above all other things, will abhorre all *Covenants* with you. And if you, having now such opportunity and power, shall not thoroughly cleanse the Land of these spirituell whoredomes so boldly facing and even out-facing the glorious Gospell professed among us; be sure, that, in stead of a blessing upon your Consultations and proceedings, you will draw downe a Curse that will cleave to you, and goe home with you, and scatter like poyson over all parts and Corners of the Kingdome, till all be consumed and become a desolation.

You all I thinke, agree upon the necessity of a great Reformation. Where should you begin then, but where God ever begins? Looke into the Stories of *Asa*, *Iehosaphat*, *Hezekiah*, *Iosiah*, and even of *Manasseh* himself, (the grossest Idolater and most bloudy Tyrant that ever reigned in *Iudah*) when once God had thoroughly humbled him; and you shall ever finde that they began their grand Reformation at *Idols*, and *Idolatry* committed with them. I speake not this to backe or countenance any tumultuous or seditious spirits that have lately been stirred up to doe things without Commission; but to You, whom God hath duely called to the worke, and indispenibly requires it at your hands.

3. Execute
true Iudgement.
Isa. 58. 6.

3. Execute true Iudgement and Justice. Loose the band of wickednesse, undoe the heavy burdens, let the oppressed goe free,

free, and break every yoke of the oppressor. This is a maine 3. *Exhorta-*
 part of an acceptable Fast, and therefore must be per-
 formed of all that will enter into Covenant with God. *tion.*

And this was part of Gods Answer to the Jewes enqui- *Meanes.*
 ring of the Prophet whether they should continue their
 solemne Fasts? *Zach. 7.* Therefore herein deale im-
 partially and throughly, for hereby the Throne it selfe
 is established. It is true, a difference must be put be-
 tween those that are only led on in evill wayes by o-
 thers, and those that are leaders of others: but it be-
 comes not me to prescribe to you in this case, your own
 wisdom will teach you that. Only I am to pray you,
 that if you shall find any escapes to have been made in
 the Ordinary Courts of Justice, in the condigne punish-
 ment of *Murder*, and *Idolatry*, take notice of them, and
 there be sure to strike home, as *Samuel* did where *Saul*
 himselfe had been too indulgent. There is nothing
 makes you such faire Images of God (in the relation you
 now stand) as due execution of Justice and Judgement.
 Therefore, if you will indeed enter into a Covenant, let
 this be done.

4. Do your best to draw as many others as you can
 the same way. Parents and Masters are bound to take
 care that their children and families do feare, and serve
 God, as well as themselves. And You who now ap-
 peare before him in behalf of the kingdome, as you must
 enter into a Covenant for them as well as for your
 selves, so must you do your utmost that they also for
 themselves may passe under the same Covenant, with
 you. The representative Body of Israel that stood be-
 fore the Lord to make a Covenant, in *Deut. 29. 15.* made
 it not only for themselves and such as were present, but
 for all that were *absent* also. And *Iosiah* when he entred
 into,

4.
 Draw others
 also.

3. *Vse.* into a Covenant himself, he not only caused *all that were*
Exhorta- *present of Iudah at the house of the Lord*, to stand to it,
tion. *2 Chron. 34. 32.* But he *made all Israel to serve, even to serve*
Meanes. *the Lord their God*, vers. 33. that is, to strike a Covenant
 with him. Therefore take care that all others, when
 you returne home, may make a Covenant before the
 Lord to walk after him in all his Commandements: that
 God may be set up more and more, and the hearts of all
 men may be lifted up in the wayes of the Lord to take
 hold of his Covenant also. If you do not this, you do
 nothing: for more is required at your hands, than of
 private persons, who yet are bound to call upon others
 (as the men in my Text) saying, *Come and let us joyne our*
selves unto the Lord in an everlasting Covenant.

5.
 Set up Way-
 markes to
 Zion.

5. Would you have this to be done, namely, that all
 should *appare before God in Zion*, for this purpose? Then
 set up *Way-markes* to direct them thither. Take speciall
 care that the Ordinances of God be set up, and held up,
 in more puritie, and plentie. Down at once with all in-
 ventions and fancies of men, which corrupt and adulte-
 rate the pure worship of God. Let none but He be wor-
 shipped, and let no worship be thrust upon him which
 himselfe hath not prescribed. Herein especially (yet
 still within your bounds) be zealous, and quit your
 selves like men.

Above all, take better order for the more frequent,
 and better performance, and due countenancing of that
 now vilified (but highly necessary) Ordinance of Prea-
 ching, which, albeit it be Gods own arme and power
 unto salvation, is yet brought into so deep contempt
 (and by none more than by those who should labour
 most to hold up the honour of it) that it is made a mat-
 ter of scorne, and become the odious Character of a
Puritan,

Puritan, to be an assiduous Preacher. Yea, so farre have 3. *Vse.*
some men run mad this way, that it is held a crime de- *Exhorta-*
serving Censure in the highest Ecclesiasticall Court *tion.*
in this Kingdome, to tell but a few Clergy men out of *Meanes.*
a Pulpit, that it is an essentiall part of the Office of a
Bishop, to Preach *. Some of you know that I belye
them not.

* But *ab initio*
it was not so.

The third

part of the
Hom. against

the perill of
Idolatriy,

speaking of
the Bishops

of the Primi-

tive times,
saith, that

They were then

Preaching Bi-

shops, and more

often scene in

Pulpits than in

Princes Pa-

laces, more of-

ten occupied in

his Legacy,

who said, Go

ye into the

whole world,

and preach the

Gospel to all

men, than in

And is it not then high time to vindicate the honour
of Preaching from those virulent and scurrilous tongues
and pens, that have of late daies (more then ever) blas-
phem'd this Ordinance; and, to take more pitie of the
many darke and barren parts of this Kingdome, where
many scarce have a Sermon in seven yeeres; nay some
(as divers of worth do credibly report) not in their
whole lives? Hath not God himselfe said plainly,
a Where there is no vision the people perish? Is it not his
own complaint, *b My people are destroyed for lack of know-*
ledge? And how so? thus; for a long season Israel had
been without a teaching Priest, and without the Law, 2 Chro.
15. 3. And mark too, that while they had no teaching
Priest they were *without the true God* also. For, there is
no coming at the true God, in the ordinary way, but by a
teaching Priest. *c How shall they heare without a Prea-*
cher? And *d it pleaseth God by the foolishnesse of preaching*
to save them that beleeve: and *e faith comes by hearing.*

speaking of

the Bishops

of the Primi-

tive times,

saith, that

They were then

Preaching Bi-

shops, and more

often scene in

Pulpits than in

Princes Pa-

laces, more of-

ten occupied in

his Legacy,

who said, Go

ye into the

whole world,

and preach the

Gospel to all

Wherefore I dare pronounce, that while so many
thousands within the Kings Dominions, especially in
England, Wales, and Ireland, are still suffered to sit in
such darknesse and in the shadow of death, and so to perish
for ever for want of constant, sound, profitable Preach-
ing, it is impossible that they should be capable of a
Covenant with God; or, that it may be truely said,
that the maine body of these Kingdomes are in case to

ye into the

whole world,

and preach the

Gospel to all

men, than in

Embassages

and affaires of

Princes of this

world, pag. 59.

edit. 1623.

a Prov 29. 18.

b Hos. 4. 6.

c Rom. 10. 14.

d 1 Cor. 1. 2.

e Rom. 10. 17.

3. Use.
Exhorta-
tion.
Meanes.

make a Covenant with him ; unlesse you, the Representative Body thereof, take more care than ever yet hath been taken in this behalfe.

I know the many plea's of many idle droanes and mercilesse men to excuse and defend an unpreaching, or seldome-preaching Ministry ; but all their fig-leaves are too short to cover their own shame, and the nakednesse of those poore perishing people whom such men make naked, to their own destruction also.

To tell us, that preaching indeed is necessary for the planting of a Church, but not so afterwards : is nothing but to bewray their owne sottish ignorance. Is not the word preached, the *milk* and food whereby men are, and must be continually nourished *to grow* up in the body of Christ, as well as the *Seed* whereof they are first begotten unto Christ ? And can men that are born, and living, live safely, or at all, without continuall supply of food convenient for them ?

What fearefull trifling is this in a businesse of such high Concernment ! Good *Iehoshaphat*, when *his heart was once lift up in the wayes of the Lord*, tooke other order : for, he sent not only some of the prime *Levites* and *Priests*, who *taught in Iudah and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them, and went about through all the Cities of Iudah and taught the people*, 2 Chron. 17. 8, 9. but with them, he sent divers of his *Princes and chiefe Officers*, *Benhail, Obadiah*, and sundry others, to see that this work should be effectually done, *vers. 7.* yea (as our late Translation hath it) *he sent to them to teach in the Cities of Iudah* : that is, that they should take as much care of the businesse, by putting on the *Priests and Levites*, as if they themselves in person were bound to do all the worke. And hence it was, that God gave this
testimony

1 Pet. 2. 2.
Ephes. 4.
Iam. 1. 18.
1 Pet. 1. 23.

testimony of *Iehoshaphat*, that he walked in the first wayes of his father *David*, vers. 3. that he had riches and honour in abundance, vers. 5. and that the feare of the Lord fell upon all the Kingdomes of the Land round about *Iudah*, so that they made no warre against *Iehoshaphat*, vers. 10. So that, beside the spirituall benefit, a Preaching Ministry is one of the best advantages to secure a State; it is (you see) not only an hedge, but *walles and Bulwarks* unto any Kingdome.

3: Vse.
Exhorta-
tion.
Meanes.

And yet, as many of our blind guides and Idol Shepherds care not to erect Preaching where there is none, so doe they all they can to cheat and defraud those of it who doe or would enjoy it, sometimes by pulling it downe where it is set up, and (to fill up the measure of their wickednesse) glorying in it, when they have done; sometimes by striking out the teeth of it, that if men will needes preach, yet it shall be to little purpose; one-ly a frigid, toothlesse, saplesse discourse, never piercing deeper than the eare. If the Preacher come home to convince the Conscience of particulars that need reformation, (which yet was the old course, and should be so still) the Preacher is either derided as worthy of nothing but contempt, or else censured as indiscreet, rash, factious, and seditious.

And least men should surfeit of preaching, how be all Sermons, in the afternoones of the Lord's dayes, cryed downe, as the markes of Iudaizing Puritanisme, and as a burden intolerable to the people!

Indeed, it is true, that when Authority first commanded the afternoones Sermon to be converted into *Catechising*, there was not onely no hurt done, but a wise and needfull course prescribed for the best edifying of popular Auditories. But as some have handled the mat-

3. *Vse.*
Exhorta-
tion.
 Meanes.

ter, it is now become a great hindrance to edification. If a Minister would carefully and solidly open the severall heads of Catechisme, confirme them by Scripture, and bring them home by some short and familiar application most sutable to vulgar eares and Capacities; I hold it simply the most profitable exercise (at least for one part of the day) that can be set up for the increase of sound knowledge and Piety: and pity it is that this is so much neglected. *But this*, say our new Masters, *is worse than preaching*. Therefore they enjoyne all to keep onely to the bare Questions and Answers of the *Chila's* Catechisme. And if any presume to adde any exposition or instruction, he is by some hurried from post to pillar, and censured as a pernicious Malefactor.

And as they have thus thrust all preaching (be it but Catechetical) out of the Church in the afternoones of the Lords day, so have they shut divers able, godly, discreet Pastors out of their owne Pulpits on the weeke dayes, even in Populous Townes, where the Ministers were willing to bestow their paines, (and so for many yeares with great fruit and comfort to the whole Country had done) *gratis*, for the refreshing of many hungry Soules who had no preaching at home in their owne Parishes, and dare not stirre thence on the Lords day to seeke it abroad.

Nay, some of your Cathedrall Men are come to that passe, that when any Sermon (such as it is) is preached in the Cathedrall or Collegiate Church, no Sermon must then be preached in the Parish Church or Churches adjoyning, meerely to uphold the pompe and State of the Greater Church, and for feare of lessening the Auditory, or diminishing the honour of the Preacher, (who many times deserves little enough) where as not

a fourth part of the Congregation (by this meanes defrauded of Preaching in the Parish Church) can possibly come within hearing, or ken of the Cathedrall Pulpit-man.

3. Use.
Exhortation.
Meanes.

Oh Beloved! are these, wayes to set forth Christ to the people for their salvation, to display God in all his glorious Attributes and Perfections, and to bring them within view of the beauties and Excellencies of God in his Covenant and Communion with his people, so as to draw them to a Covenant! Nay hence, hence it comes to passe that God is extremely dishonoured, his Name blasphemed, his day abominably prophaned, and his people run headlong (like beasts to the Shambles) by droves, to Popery, Anabaptisme, Familisme, Atheisme, and what not, that may cast, and lock them under the hatches of everlasting damnation.

— *Quis talia fando,*

Temperet a lachrymis? —

I know that some of those Step-fathers and hard-hearted Wretches, who be indeed the chiefe (if not the onely) cause of all this, blush not to attribute the daily falling off of multitudes from our Church, to over-much Preaching: but this is as rationall, as was his mad opinion touching Saint Paul, that *much learning had made him mad*. These are crying Abominations, that will cry as loud against you, as now they doe against the Authors of them, if you reforme them not.

Wonder not at my length, and heate in this point. It is a matter of greatest Consequence, and of all other most proper for a Preacher to be zealous in. And give me leave to tell you, that this must be put in the head of the Catalogue of your weightiest Consultations at this time, if you desire ever to draw the people of this & the

3. Use. Exhortation. Minions into any Covenant and Communion with God, or to settle any thing for the good of your selves and cuntryes.

Meanes. King *James* indeed took commiseration of the grosse ignorance of multitudes in the North parts of this Kingdome, and sent some Preachers at his owne charge among them. A Pious and a Noble worke! But what through the unsetled wandrings, idleneffe, the superficial and unprofitable performanccs of some of these Preachers, and what through the supine negligence of some in Authoritie who should have looked better to those itinerary Ministers, most of that labour and charge was little better than lost. For, some of you know, that in no parts of the Kingdome hath there been such an increase of Papists, as in those very Corners, where that sleight meanes was used to reduce men from Popery.

I beseech you therefore by all the mercies of God, by all the Bowels of Christ in shedding of his deereft bloud for those precious Soules, who now, even by thousands and millions miserably perish in their ignorance and sins, that you would carefully reforme, or cast out all idle, unsound, unprofitable, and scandalous Ministers; and provide a sound, godly, profitable and settled Preaching Ministry in every Congregation through the Land and the annexed Dominions; and, to take no lesse care for their diligent and constant performance of their dutie both in life and Doctrine, as also for their liberall maintenance, (that may be still capable of improvement, as the times grow harder, and commodities dearer) that both themselves who preach the Gospel, and all theirs also, may cheerefully and comfortably live of the Gospel. And let us once see *Zion built up*, by your industry, in perfect beaurie.

Lastly,

Of the Commons House of Parliament. 79

Lastly, When you set upon this great businesse of a 3. Use. Covenant, see that you do it out of love to God, and with Exhorta- all your heart: else, it will come to nothing. If you tion. would to Zion, your fates must be set, and settled thither- Meanes. ward. If you would make a Covenant, you must not be 6. unwilling, afraid, ashamed to be accounted such Cove- When a Co- nanters, but do it with a steddy, open, undaunted coun- venant is to be made, do it tenance and resolution: You must love the name of your with all the heart; and God to be his servants, *Isay 56. 6.* You have seen how *Asa* forget it not when it is made. and all his Kingdome did it; they both entred into Co- 2 Chro. 15. 15. venant, and they swore it, with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire, and he was found of them, and gave them rest round about.

Thus if you do, God shall be set up, Religion advanced, your grievances removed, you shall heare no more such complainings in our streets. All blessings shall follow, not your selves alone, but the whole Kingdome, in our King and his Government, in your Consultations and proceedings, in the publique, settled, and glorious Peace, and prosperitie of both Church and State. The blessings of the Earth, in the Citie, the field, your bodies, posteritie, in all your goings out and comings in; The blessings of heaven in the meanes of Grace, the beginnings and growth in grace, the light of Gods countenance which is better than life; and, after all, even the fulnesse of both grace and glory in the full, cleare, and eternall fruition of God himselfe in the highest heavens, shall all compasse, and Crowne you for ever.

Provided alwayes, that when once this Covenant is made, you take care that it never be forgotten, but heeded, minded, and performed; that as you close with God, so you may alwayes continue with him. Then shall this whole

80 *The first Sermon, at the late Fast, &c.*

3. *Vse.* whole nation and the children which are yet unborne
Exhorta- praise and blesse the Lord for ever for this Parliament,
tion. and your endeavours in it. But I feele my self spent, and
Meanes. therefore must desist, yet with this hope, that my Re-
verend fellow-labourer designed for the other part of
this worke, will begin where I leave, and set
on with more strength what my weakness
is not able to performe.

F I N I S.

Errata.

Pag. 30. lin. 28. read *and*. pag. 45. lin. 2. r. *fit.* errors
in the pointing, correct, or pardon.

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